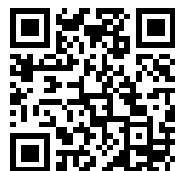

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ESSEX UNITS IN THE WAR
1914-1919.

2ND BATTALION
THE ESSEX REGIMENT
VOL. 2

A 474286



FRANCIS H. D. C. WHITMORE

3/-

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Colours of the 2nd Bn. The Essex Regiment, 1927.



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FOREWORD.

(By MAJOR-GENERAL A. CARTON DE WIART, V.C., C.B.,
C.M.G., D.S.O.).

I SUPPOSE every man who took part in the Great War has, at different times, thought of those he served with; men he had been commanded by and men he had commanded. Time brings little change in this respect and I find myself often thinking of my old comrades.

My first connection with the 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment ("The Pompadours") was in January, 1917, when I was appointed to the command of the 12th Brigade, 4th Division, in which the Battalion was serving. For ten months the Battalion served under me and during that period we took part in the big attacks at Arras and Passchendael. The former, so successful and easy on the first day, entailed terrible hardship and losses afterwards, and none suffered more than the Pompadours. Passchendael was very hard from beginning to end, and the Battalion had its full share again of hardship and casualties. But many of the "ordinary" tours in the trenches entailed just as much fatigue and danger—but less glory!

Never once in all those months did the Battalion fail. It was always a real pleasure to me to go and see them, in the line or out of it, for one knew that they would do whatever they were asked to do, and do it in that cheerful spirit which means so much in war. There were times when it seemed to me that cheerfulness was the greatest military virtue a man could possess. It is almost ridiculous to say so now, but such was the case.

Unfortunately, in war commanders sometimes have to give orders which they know cannot successfully be carried out, but which have to be given to help in some other quarter. This happened, naturally, during our association, but such an order was carried out with the same spirit and ardour as an order which assured an easy success. In my humble opinion, no greater test exists for a soldier.

We had good times, and we had bad, very bad times, but the Battalion was always the same and I only hope that some of the members of the Battalion, at any rate, realized how much I appreciated this and admired them for it.

So much depends upon the personal relations existing between men and their commanders, and there has to be much "give and take" on both sides, but with the Pompadours all seemed so easy. I know I always thought I was taking a great deal and giving so little.

They have paid me the great compliment of asking me to write the Foreword to the History of the Battalion, a task for which I am totally unfitted, and which, therefore, makes the compliment the greater and the more appreciated.

I know that when present members of the Battalion read these lines they will realize the very high opinion in which the Pompadours were held during the Great War, and that they will feel it their proud duty to carry on the tradition.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS Volume is the second of the series describing the work of Essex units in the Great War and is the third to be published. It is concerned with the history of the 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment, formerly the 56th, or West Essex, Regiment of Foot, from its formation in 1755 to the present day. Prior to the war recently concluded the 2nd Essex had participated in several honourable and gallant enterprises, from the capture of Havana in 1762 to the South African War in 1902, the most notable achievement, perhaps, being the defence of Gibraltar, 1779-1782. For this section of the narrative Cannon's "Historical Record of the 56th" and Sir John Fortescue's "History of the British Army" have been of very great service. In addition thereto the author has received generous and much appreciated help from the late Mr. F. W. Brewer, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, whose researches have enabled a complete history of the formation of the Battalion to be given; to the Librarian and Assistant Librarian of the War Office (Mr. W. Y. Baldry); to the Librarian of the United Services Institution (Major H. G. Parkyn, O.B.E.), now Librarian of the Staff College, Camberley; to the Librarian and Assistant Librarian of the India Office and to Miss Singer Keating, who readily placed their records at disposal which threw much new light upon the amazingly gallant career of Lieut.-General Sir Henry Keating in the East Indies, when colonel of the 2/56th; to Colonel F. J. Brown, C.B., whose diary has been a valuable source of information not only respecting the Nile Campaign, but of later years, and to Colonel C. H. Colvin, C.B., D.S.O., who also served with the 2nd Essex in its journey up the Nile.

For the story of the Battalion's deeds in the war of 1914-1919 the author has to express his great indebtedness to the staff of the War Record Office and in particular to Major A. F. Becke, R.E., and Mr. E. A. Dixon: Brig.-General F. G. Anley, C.B., Colonel A. P. and Mrs. Churchill, Colonel F. Landon, V.D., Major H. R. Bowen, Major R. N. Thompson, Major Pechell, Major G. Disney, Captain A. E. Maitland, D.S.O., M.C., Lieut. M. S. Claydon, R.Q.M.S. Ricketts, Mr. J. M. Finn, Colchester, Mr. C. J. Webb, Coggeshall, and Mr. J. M. Perry, Forest Gate. The three last-named have been particularly assiduous in supplying facts for the narrative of events on Arras Day, March 28th, 1918. The Commanding Officer of the Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Roberts West) has been most helpful, whilst the Essex Territorial Force Association (especially the Chairman, Brig.-General R. B. Colvin, C.B., and the Secretary, Lieut.-Colonel E. U. Bradbridge, D.L.) have been ever ready to assist and encourage.



Colours of the 2nd Bn. The Essex Regiment, 1927.

THE ESSEX REGIMENT

2nd BATTALION (56th)
(POMPADOURS).

BY

JOHN W^M. BURROWS, F.S.A.

*Published by arrangement with the Essex Territorial Army
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Two officers in particular have been generous in placing their professional knowledge and skill at the author's disposal. Lieut.-Colonel F. Moffitt, D.S.O., served with the 2nd Essex for many years and was with the Battalion in the opening stages of the war. His support and experienced counsel have been always at command. Captain D. H. Burles, late Middlesex Regiment, has again, in an honorary capacity, prepared the numerous maps and sketches for this volume, as in the two preceding narratives; no trouble has been too much; no detail too small to be overlooked. Others whose assistance is recognized are Mr. H. H. Burrows—who took several of the photographs when upon a tour of the battlefields of France and Belgium—and Mr. H. W. Tompkins, F.R.Hist.S. Mr. Findlay Muirhead, M.A., of the "Blue Guides," has revised the place names, thus repeating the honorary service performed when the two previous volumes of the series were published. Major M. Chawner has kindly allowed me to draw upon his extensive collection of photographs to illustrate the Boer War.

Major-General Carton de Wiart's kindness in writing the Foreword is also acknowledged.

With this volume is published a preface relating to the Essex Regiment, including its battle honours, Colonels of the Regiment, commanding officers of the two Regular Battalions, a short history of the affiliated Regiment—the Essex Fusiliers of Canada and the 44th Battalion, Australian Military Forces—and lists of officers who were present at notable battles and sieges. In this difficult task the author had most appreciated help and encouragement from the Colonel of the Regiment, Major-General F. Ventris, C.B.

From August, 1914, until January, 1919, the Battalion was engaged in incessant warfare in France and Belgium, during which time it achieved the distinction, by its gallantry, of adding three battle honours to the record of the Essex Regiment, viz., Le Cateau, Marne and Ypres, 1915. It is a story which all Essex men and women will read with pride mingled with sorrow. Pride at what was accomplished by valour, constancy, steadfastness and cheerful endurance; sorrow that in playing so noble a part the County and the Battalion should mourn the loss of 1,457 officers and other ranks.

JOHN Wm. BURROWS.

Southend-on-Sea,
June, 1927.



MAJOR-GENERAL F. VENTRIS, C.B., *Colonel of the Regiment.*

THE ESSEX REGIMENT.

1st (44th, EAST ESSEX), 2nd (56th, WEST ESSEX), 3rd (ESSEX (RIFLES) MILITIA), 4th (T.), 5th (T.), 6th (T.) and 7th (T.) BATTALIONS.

BATTLE HONOURS.

Borne upon the King's Colour: "Le Cateau," "Marne, 1914," "Ypres, 1915, 1917," "Loos," "Somme, 1916, 1918," "Arras, 1917, 1918," "Cambrai, 1917, 1918," "Selle," "Gallipoli, 1915-16," "Gaza."

Borne upon the Regimental Colour: The Castle and Key, superscribed Gibraltar, 1779-82, and with the motto *Montis Insignia Calpe* underneath (2nd Bn.). The Sphinx, superscribed "Egypt" (1st Bn.). An Eagle (1st Bn.). "Moro" (2nd Bn.), "Havannah" (2nd Bn.), "Badajos" (1st Bn.), "Salamanca" (1st Bn.), "Peninsula" (1st Bn.), "Bladensburg" (1st Bn.), "Waterloo" (1st Bn.), "Ava" (1st Bn.), "Alma" (1st Bn.), "Inkerman" (1st Bn.), "Sevastopol" (1st and 2nd Bns.), "Taku Forts" (1st Bn.), "Nile, 1884-5" (2nd Bn.), "Relief of Kimberley" (1st Bn.), "Paardeberg" (1st Bn.), "South Africa, 1899-02" (1st and 2nd Bns.)¹

The full list allowed for the War 1914-1919 was as follows: "Le Cateau," "Retreat from Mons," "Marne, 1914," "Aisne, 1914," "Messines, 1914," "Armentières, 1914," "Ypres, 1915, 1917," "St. Julien," "Frezenberg," "Bellewaarde," "Loos," "Somme, 1916, 1918," "Albert, 1916, 1918," "Bazentin," "Delville Wood," "Pozières," "Flers-Courcelette," "Morval," "Thiepval," "Le Transloy," "Ancre Heights," "Ancre, 1916, 1918," "Bapaume, 1917, 1918," "Arras, 1917, 1918," "Scarpe, 1917, 1918," "Arleux," "Pilckem," "Langemarck, 1917," "Menin Road," "Broodseinde," "Poelcappelle," "Passchendaele," "Cambrai, 1917, 1918," "St. Quentin," "Avre," "Villers-Bretonneux," "Lys," "Hazebrouck," "Béthune," "Amiens," "Drocourt-Quéant," "Hindenburg Line," "Havrincourt," "Epéhy," "St. Quentin Canal," "Selle," "Sambre," "France and Flanders, 1914-1918," "Helles," "Landing at Helles," "Krithia," "Suvla," "Landing at Suvla," "Scimitar Hill," "Gallipoli, 1915-16," "Rumani," "Egypt, 1915-17," "Gaza," "Jaffa," "Megiddo," "Sharon," "Palestine, 1917-18."

1. Honours for service in South Africa were also earned by the 3rd Battalion, which went to South Africa in 1902, and by the four Essex Volunteer Battalions, later known as 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Territorial Battalions, 161st Brigade, 54th Division. They contributed special service companies to the 1st Battalion and also detachments to the City Imperial Volunteers, a regiment raised by the City of London for the South African War.

All the honours emblazoned upon the King's Colour were won in the war of 1914-1919. Eleven battalions of the Essex Regiment served overseas in that great campaign. They were: 1st, 2nd, 4th (T.), 5th (T.), 6th (T.), 7th (T.), 9th (S.), 10th (S.), 11th (S.), 13th (S.) and 15th (S.). The 1st and 2nd Garrison Battalions of the Essex Regiment also did duty abroad. Members of the Regiment who were killed in action, died of wounds or died of disease numbered 8,209, distributed as follows: 1st Battalion, 1,787; 2nd Battalion, 1,457; 4th Battalion, 445; 5th Battalion, 381; 6th Battalion, 270; 7th Battalion, 305; 9th Battalion, 1,044; 10th Battalion, 1,014; 11th Battalion, 957; 13th Battalion, 575; 15th Battalion, 24. The 2nd Battalion was present at Le Cateau, August 26th, 1914, and was the first unit of the Essex Regiment to be actively engaged. Again, as part of the 12th Brigade, the 2nd Battalion forced the passage of the Marne at the barrage near La Ferte in September, 1914, and was also employed in the battles of St. Julien, Frezenberg Ridge and Bellewarde Ridge, constituting the group "Ypres, 1915," and for its services there the battalion was three times mentioned in despatches by Earl French of Ypres, the British Commander-in-Chief. In the series of encounters in the Ypres Salient, 1917, the 1st, 2nd and 10th Battalions were heavily engaged. At Loos, 1915, when the newly raised Service battalions were first under fire, the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions fought with distinction, whilst in battles of the Somme, 1916, the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th, 11th and 13th Battalions—all the Essex infantry units in France at that time—were frequently in action. Again in 1918, in the battles of the same area, five of the six battalions (less the 13th) were involved, struggling against the German offensive and then, with depleted numbers, turning and driving back the enemy armies. It was at Arras that the 2nd Battalion specially distinguished itself, with the rest of the 4th Division, in the critical fighting of March 28th. The 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th and 13th Battalions were present at the successful offensive from Arras in 1917, the 1st Battalion, with the Newfoundlanders, being specially proud of the part it played in operations subsequent to the capture of Monchy-le-Preux, when the 1st Essex alone sustained 600 casualties. In the hard fighting in the same area in 1918, the 2nd Battalion was present, for it was engaged in the battle of Drocourt-Quéant, when, in co-operation with Dominion troops, a successful attack was delivered over a wide belt of heavily wired and trenched country. Sir Jocelyn Byng's army for the push in November, 1917, known as the Battle of Cambrai, included the 1st, 9th, 11th and 13th Battalions, of which the 1st and 13th were prominent in holding up the German counter-attack. One company of the 13th Battalion refused to give ground, allowing time for the rest of the unit to withdraw. The warfare in the Cambrai area in 1918 was participated in by the 1st Battalion and was notable

for the over-running of the Hindenburg Line. The series of operations which culminated in the collapse of the German armies is represented by "Selle" and in this advance to victory the 1st, 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions bore a part. "Gallipoli, 1915," was earned by the 1st Battalion, which fought throughout this expedition, from the landing on "W" Beach in April, 1915, to the withdrawal in January, 1916. The Essex Infantry Brigade (4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions) won the honour "Gaza," which covers the three actions which were fought before the city was captured in November, 1917.

During the campaign the battalions were attached as follows : 1st Battalion—88th Brigade, 29th Division, and later 112th Brigade, 37th Division ; 2nd Battalion—12th Brigade, 4th Division ; 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions—161st Brigade, 54th (East Anglian) Division ; 9th Battalion—35th Brigade, 12th Division ; 10th Battalion—53rd Brigade, 18th Division ; 11th Battalion—71st Brigade, 24th Division, later 18th Brigade, 6th Division ; 13th Battalion—6th Brigade, 2nd Division.

ESSEX REGIMENT CHAPEL.

On March 1st, 1925, on the recommendation of Major-General Ventris, the Colonel of the Regiment, and with the sanction of the Army Council—during the chaplaincy of Rev. A. J. Wilcox—the Garrison Church at Warley, near Brentwood, was dedicated as the Essex Regiment Chapel by the Chaplain General of the Forces (Bishop Taylor Smith), upon which occasion also the colours of the 10th and 11th (Service) Battalions and the 1st and 2nd Garrison Battalions of The Essex Regiment were received for safe custody. The day was further memorable in that the colours of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions, emblazoned with war honours, were all carried on parade. The Lord Lieutenant of Essex (Lord Lambourne) was present at the service and subsequently addressed the troops. Other colours hung in the Church are those of the 2nd Battalion (56th), carried from 1826 to 1864, the 5th Battalion Essex Local Militia, the 15th (Service) Battalion and the 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion. The last-named was transferred from Harwich Church and handed over by the Lord Lieutenant to the Bishop of Chelmsford for safe custody on October 31st, 1926. In May, 1927, the colours of the 9th (Service) Battalion, which had been presented by the Prince of Wales in France in 1918, were handed over for safe custody by the Colonel of the Regiment (Major-General F. Ventris, C.B.). The sermon on that occasion was preached by Rev. H. P. Berkeley, M.C., formerly Chaplain of the 12th Division, of which the 9th Battalion formed part. The Church also contains the following memorials : To Major-General Hay, who commanded at Warley, when it was the depot of the East India Company ; to those of the 2nd Essex who lost their lives in Egypt and the Nile Campaign, 1884-6 ; to those of the 1st Battalion who fell

Battalion, C.E.F., was authorized to be raised in December, 1915, in the regimental area, and sailed for England in June, 1916, with a strength of 80 officers and 825 other ranks. In 1915 between 200 and 300 men were enlisted for the 38rd Canadian Battalion, C.E.F. The 241st Battalion, C.E.F., was formed in the regimental area in 1916 and left Canada in April, 1917, with a strength of 21 officers and 625 other ranks. When in April, 1920, the Fusiliers were re-organized into one active and two reserve battalions of four companies each, the 1st perpetuated the 18th Battalion, C.E.F., the 2nd reserve, the 99th Battalion, C.E.F., and the 3rd reserve the 241st Battalion, C.E.F. The 99th and 241st Battalions did not proceed to France, but were used when in England to provide reinforcements to other units in the fighting zone. The 18th Battalion had long and honourable service on the Western Front. It left Canada for England with a strength of 36 officers and 1,081 other ranks and, after a short stay, arrived in France on September 15th, 1915, as part of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division. It was present at the stern fighting at St. Eloi in April, 1916; by a gallant advance of 1,200 yards in September, 1916, with the 4th Brigade, it rendered possible the capture of Courcellette the same evening; took part in the battle of Ancre Heights in October, when it advanced 500 yards north of Courcellette; was with the Canadian Corps in the capture of Vimy Ridge in April, 1917; suffered in the heavy fighting at Hill 70 in August, 1917; supported the attack upon Passchendaele late in 1917; made a determined advance with the Canadian Corps on August 8th, 1918, when it covered 5,000 yards and reached the extreme limit of the objective east of Marcellave; co-operated with the 19th Battalion in the attack and capture of Fransart on August 16th; fought with the Canadian Corps in the battle of the Scarpe at the end of August, capturing Guemappe, and in five days achieving an advance of seven miles; reached the southern outskirts of Iwuy after crossing the Canal de l'Escaut on October 10th and when the Armistice was declared at 11 a.m. on November 11th, 1918, was at Ciply, immediately south of Mons, marching thence to the Rhine. The Battalion returned to the south of Brussels, Belgium, in January, 1919, and in April was transferred, with the other units of the 2nd Division, to England, and thence to Canada for demobilization. The 1st Battalion, C.E.F., was raised in Western Ontario and was composed of drafts from 16 Militia regiments, including the Essex Fusiliers, sailing with the first Canadian contingent in September, 1914. It was ordered to France in February, 1915, and was in reserve in April at Vlamertinghe, when the German gas attack temporarily broke the line, and it was pushed forward to fill the gap, suffering heavy casualties in the operation.

In 1919 Edward Prince of Wales paid an official visit to Windsor Armouries and was warmly welcomed. The re-organization of the Fusiliers, effected in 1921, placed the headquarters and three

Militia, with headquarters at Windsor, Ontario. This unit dates from 1866, when the 23rd Essex Battalion of Light Infantry was constituted, with Lieut.-Colonel A. Rankin in command. There were six companies, one each at Windsor (organized in 1862), Sandwich (1862), Leamington (1863), Amherstburg (1863), North Ridge (1861) and Kingsville (1866). The Battalion was removed from the list of active Militia in 1870, because it failed to complete its re-organization, but the Windsor and Leamington companies were retained as independent companies. These two continued to function until 1882, when the Windsor Company was attached to the 24th (Kent) Battalion and the Leamington Company to the 25th (Elgin) Battalion. At the time of the North-West Rebellion the 21st (Essex) Battalion was raised and the two independent companies became the first and second companies of the new unit. The three other companies were formed at Essex Centre, Amherstburg and Windsor respectively. Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Wilkinson was in command. The title was changed in 1887 to 21st Battalion, Essex Fusiliers, and again in 1901 to 21st Regiment, Essex Fusiliers, when it became a city corps, with headquarters at "The Armouries," which were opened at Windsor in the year following. The Battalion in 1904 had an establishment of eight companies, of which only two (Walkerville and Leamington) had headquarters outside Windsor. The Governor-General (the Earl of Elgin) was entertained by the officers of the Battalion when on a visit to Windsor and in 1902 the detachment was invited to Detroit to partake in the festivities consequent upon the visit of President Roosevelt, and was inspected by him. The band of the Coldstream Guards was welcomed in 1903 and that of the Black Watch in 1904. One of the Regiment's most treasured distinctions is that it was the first Canadian regiment, as such, to enter the United States since the American War of Independence, when the members were the guests of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition at St. Louis in 1904 and were there visited by General Cronje, one of the Boer leaders in the South African War. The Fusiliers supplied part of the guard of honour for the Duke and Duchess of York (King George V and Queen Mary) when taking part in the Quebec Tercentenary in 1908.

Upon the outbreak of war in August, 1914, details were called out for home defence duty, which was the protection of the Windsor Armouries. The detachment was originally composed of 14 N.C.O.'s and men, under Sergeant-Major Smith. The duties were increased until by May, 1916, the guard comprised ninety N.C.O.'s and men. When, however, depot battalions were formed in October, 1917, the details were relieved from active service. The Battalion contributed hundreds of recruits to the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Six officers and 223 other ranks were sent in 1914 to the 1st Battalion, C.E.F., and between 200 and 300 other ranks to the 18th Battalion, C.E.F. The 99th

[illegible]

The re-organization of headquarters and three

companies in Windsor, with "A" Company in Walkerville, but in 1924 the Walkerville Company was transferred to Windsor, so that the Battalion was concentrated there.

The successive lieut.-colonels commanding the Essex Fusiliers have been : J. R. Wilkinson (1885-91), J. H. Beattie (1891-97), J. C. Guillot (1897-1902), N. A. Bartlet (1902-08), F. H. Laing (1908-12), E. S. Wigle (1912-15), S. C. Robinson (1915-24), G. H. Wilkinson (1924).

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COLONELS OF THE 44th REGIMENT OF FOOT.

Colonel James Long, 1741-1743.

Colonel John Lee, 1743-1751.

Colonel Sir Peter Halkett, Bart., 1751-1755.

Colonel Robert Ellison, 1755-1756.

Major-General James Abercromby, 1756-1781.

Major-General Charles Rainsford, 1781-1809.

General Sir Thomas Trigge, Bart., 1809-1814.

General the Earl of Suffolk, 1814-1820.

Lieut.-General Gore Browne, 1820-1843.

Lieut.-General the Hon. Patrick Stuart, 1843-1855.

Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Ashworth, 1855-1858.

General Sir Thomas Reed, K.C.B., 1858-1884.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING THE 44th
REGIMENT.

Sir Peter Halkett, Bart, 1741-1755 (killed in action).

The Hon. Thomas Gage, 1755-1758.

William Farquhar, 1758-1759.

William Eyre, 1759-1764.

James Agnew, 1764-1777 (killed in action).

Henry Hope, 1777-1789.

William John Darley, 1789-1793.

Robert Riddell, 1793-1796.

David Ogilvie, 1796-1801 (killed in action).

Kenneth McKenzie, 1801-1803.

Alexander Dirom, 1803-1804.

Sir Arthur Brooke, K.C.B., 1804-1819.¹

Sir George Henry Frederick Berkeley, 1819-1821.

Joseph Wanton Morrison, 1821-1825 (died of cholera at sea
after Burmese War).

J. Chilton L. Carter, 1825-1827.

John Shelton, 1827-1845.²

Hon. Augustus Almeric Spencer, 1845-1856.

Charles Dunbar Staveley, 1856-1865.³

1. Colonel Sir Arthur Brooke commanded the 1st Battalion when ordered to America in 1814 and was a brigadier in the expeditionary force until Sir Patrick Ross was killed in September, when he became commander of the force. He was a brigadier in the attack upon New Orleans in 1815, when General Sir E. Pakenham was in command. The acting command of the Battalion was held by the Hon. Thomas Mullins, who, himself, was a temporary brigadier in September, 1814, at the battle near Baltimore. Major Johnson was in acting command of the Battalion on that occasion.
2. Lieut.-Colonel Shelton was a local brigadier-general and major-general in the East Indies from January, 1839, to January, 1842, and Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Mackrell was, therefore, in command of the Regiment during the fighting at Kabul, as a result of which he died from wounds in November, 1841. During the retreat Colonel Shelton resumed command of the Regiment.
3. Colonel Staveley was only in nominal command of the Regiment for several years before his retirement from that position in 1865, he being constantly on staff employ, and Lieut.-Colonel MacMahon was in command in his absence.

William MacMahon, 1865-1866.
John Josiah Hort, 1866-1869.
Andrew Browne, 1869-1871.
Thomas Raikes, 1871-1875.
Richard Preston, 1875-1876.
John Sidney Hand, 1876-1881.

**LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING 2nd BATTALION OF
THE 44th REGIMENT.**

Thomas Nichol, 1808-1804.
Robert Garden, 1804-1809.
Sir Charles Bulkeley Egerton, Bart., 1809-1811.
Hon. George Carleton, 1811-1814 (killed in action).
John Millet Hamerton, 1814-1816.

**LIEUT.-COLONELS OF RESERVE BATTALION OF THE
44th REGIMENT.**

James Oliphant Clunie, 1847-1848.
Augustus Halifax Ferryman, 1848-1849.
Edward Thorpe, 1849-1850.

COLONELS OF THE 56th REGIMENT OF FOOT.

Major-General Lord Charles Manners, 1755-1761.
Lieut.-General the Hon. William Keppel, 1761-1765.
Lieut.-General James Durand, 1765-1766.
General Hunt Walsh, 1766-1795.
F.M. Sir Samuel Hulse, 1795-1797.
General the Hon. Chapple Norton, 1797-1818.
General Sir John Murray, Bart., 1818-1827.
Lieut.-General Lord Aylmer, K.C.B., 1827-1832.
Lieut.-General Sir Hudson Lowe, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
1832-1842.
Lieut.-General the Earl of Westmorland, K.C.B., G.C.H.,
1842-1859.
Lieut.-General John Home Home, 1859-1860.
General H. W. Breton, 1860.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING THE 56th REGIMENT.

Peter Parr, 1755-1760.
John Doyne, 1760-1762.
James Stewart, February-September, 1762 (died on active
service).
Alexander Monypenny, 1762-1776.
John Caulfield, 1776-1778.
Henry Johnson, 1778-1779.



MAJOR-GENERAL F. VENTRIS, C.B., Colonel of the Regiment.

THE ESSEX REGIMENT.

1st (44th, EAST ESSEX), 2nd (56th, WEST ESSEX), 3rd (ESSEX (RIFLES) MILITIA), 4th (T.), 5th (T.), 6th (T.) and 7th (T.) BATTALIONS.

BATTLE HONOURS.

Borne upon the King's Colour: "Le Cateau," "Marne, 1914," "Ypres, 1915, 1917," "Loos," "Somme, 1916, 1918," "Arras, 1917, 1918," "Cambrai, 1917, 1918," "Selle," "Gallipoli, 1915-16," "Gaza."

Borne upon the Regimental Colour: The Castle and Key, superscribed Gibraltar, 1779-82, and with the motto *Montis Insignia Calpe* underneath (2nd Bn.). The Sphinx, superscribed "Egypt" (1st Bn.). An Eagle (1st Bn.). "Moro" (2nd Bn.), "Havannah" (2nd Bn.), "Badajos" (1st Bn.), "Salamanca" (1st Bn.), "Peninsula" (1st Bn.), "Bladensburg" (1st Bn.), "Waterloo" (1st Bn.), "Ava" (1st Bn.), "Alma" (1st Bn.), "Inkerman" (1st Bn.), "Sevastopol" (1st and 2nd Bns.), "Taku Forts" (1st Bn.), "Nile, 1884-5" (2nd Bn.), "Relief of Kimberley" (1st Bn.), "Paardeberg" (1st Bn.), "South Africa, 1899-02" (1st and 2nd Bns.).¹

The full list allowed for the War 1914-1919 was as follows: "Le Cateau," "Retreat from Mons," "Marne, 1914," "Aisne, 1914," "Messines, 1914," "Armentières, 1914," "Ypres, 1915, 1917," "St. Julien," "Frezenberg," "Bellewaarde," "Loos," "Somme, 1916, 1918," "Albert, 1916, 1918," "Bazentin," "Delville Wood," "Pozières," "Flers-Courcelette," "Morval," "Thiepval," "Le Transloy," "Ancre Heights," "Ancre, 1916, 1918," "Bapaume, 1917, 1918," "Arras, 1917, 1918," "Scarpe, 1917, 1918," "Arleux," "Pilckem," "Langemarck, 1917," "Menin Road," "Broodseinde," "Poelcappelle," "Passchendaele," "Cambrai, 1917, 1918," "St. Quentin," "Avre," "Villers-Bretonneux," "Lys," "Hazebrouck," "Béthune," "Amiens," "Drocourt-Quéant," "Hindenburg Line," "Havrincourt," "Epéhy," "St. Quentin Canal," "Selle," "Sambre," "France and Flanders, 1914-1918," "Helles," "Landing at Helles," "Krithia," "Suvla," "Landing at Suvla," "Scimitar Hill," "Gallipoli, 1915-16," "Rumani," "Egypt, 1915-17," "Gaza," "Jaffa," "Megiddo," "Sharon," "Palestine, 1917-18."

1. Honours for service in South Africa were also earned by the 3rd Battalion, which went to South Africa in 1902, and by the four Essex Volunteer Battalions, later known as 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Territorial Battalions, 161st Brigade, 54th Division. They contributed special service companies to the 1st Battalion and also detachments to the City Imperial Volunteers, a regiment raised by the City of London for the South African War.

All the honours emblazoned upon the King's Colour were won in the war of 1914-1919. Eleven battalions of the Essex Regiment served overseas in that great campaign. They were: 1st, 2nd, 4th (T.), 5th (T.), 6th (T.), 7th (T.), 9th (S.), 10th (S.), 11th (S.), 13th (S.) and 15th (S.). The 1st and 2nd Garrison Battalions of the Essex Regiment also did duty abroad. Members of the Regiment who were killed in action, died of wounds or died of disease numbered 8,209, distributed as follows: 1st Battalion, 1,787; 2nd Battalion, 1,457; 4th Battalion, 445; 5th Battalion, 331; 6th Battalion, 270; 7th Battalion, 305; 9th Battalion, 1,044; 10th Battalion, 1,014; 11th Battalion, 957; 13th Battalion, 575; 15th Battalion, 24. The 2nd Battalion was present at Le Cateau, August 26th, 1914, and was the first unit of the Essex Regiment to be actively engaged. Again, as part of the 12th Brigade, the 2nd Battalion forced the passage of the Marne at the barrage near La Ferte in September, 1914, and was also employed in the battles of St. Julien, Frezenberg Ridge and Bellewarde Ridge, constituting the group "Ypres, 1915," and for its services there the battalion was three times mentioned in despatches by Earl French of Ypres, the British Commander-in-Chief. In the series of encounters in the Ypres Salient, 1917, the 1st, 2nd and 10th Battalions were heavily engaged. At Loos, 1915, when the newly raised Service battalions were first under fire, the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions fought with distinction, whilst in battles of the Somme, 1916, the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th, 11th and 13th Battalions—all the Essex infantry units in France at that time—were frequently in action. Again in 1918, in the battles of the same area, five of the six battalions (less the 13th) were involved, struggling against the German offensive and then, with depleted numbers, turning and driving back the enemy armies. It was at Arras that the 2nd Battalion specially distinguished itself, with the rest of the 4th Division, in the critical fighting of March 28th. The 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th and 13th Battalions were present at the successful offensive from Arras in 1917, the 1st Battalion, with the Newfoundlanders, being specially proud of the part it played in operations subsequent to the capture of Monchy-le-Preux, when the 1st Essex alone sustained 600 casualties. In the hard fighting in the same area in 1918, the 2nd Battalion was present, for it was engaged in the battle of Drocourt-Quéant, when, in co-operation with Dominion troops, a successful attack was delivered over a wide belt of heavily wired and trenched country. Sir Jocelyn Byng's army for the push in November, 1917, known as the Battle of Cambrai, included the 1st, 9th, 11th and 13th Battalions, of which the 1st and 13th were prominent in holding up the German counter-attack. One company of the 13th Battalion refused to give ground, allowing time for the rest of the unit to withdraw. The warfare in the Cambrai area in 1918 was participated in by the 1st Battalion and was notable

for the over-running of the Hindenburg Line. The series of operations which culminated in the collapse of the German armies is represented by "Selle" and in this advance to victory the 1st, 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions bore a part. "Gallipoli, 1915," was earned by the 1st Battalion, which fought throughout this expedition, from the landing on "W" Beach in April, 1915, to the withdrawal in January, 1916. The Essex Infantry Brigade (4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions) won the honour "Gaza," which covers the three actions which were fought before the city was captured in November, 1917.

During the campaign the battalions were attached as follows : 1st Battalion—88th Brigade, 29th Division, and later 112th Brigade, 37th Division ; 2nd Battalion—12th Brigade, 4th Division ; 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions—161st Brigade, 54th (East Anglian) Division ; 9th Battalion—35th Brigade, 12th Division ; 10th Battalion—53rd Brigade, 18th Division ; 11th Battalion—71st Brigade, 24th Division, later 18th Brigade, 6th Division ; 13th Battalion—6th Brigade, 2nd Division.

ESSEX REGIMENT CHAPEL.

On March 1st, 1925, on the recommendation of Major-General Ventris, the Colonel of the Regiment, and with the sanction of the Army Council—during the chaplaincy of Rev. A. J. Wilcox—the Garrison Church at Warley, near Brentwood, was dedicated as the Essex Regiment Chapel by the Chaplain General of the Forces (Bishop Taylor Smith), upon which occasion also the colours of the 10th and 11th (Service) Battalions and the 1st and 2nd Garrison Battalions of The Essex Regiment were received for safe custody. The day was further memorable in that the colours of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions, emblazoned with war honours, were all carried on parade. The Lord Lieutenant of Essex (Lord Lambourne) was present at the service and subsequently addressed the troops. Other colours hung in the Church are those of the 2nd Battalion (56th), carried from 1826 to 1864, the 5th Battalion Essex Local Militia, the 15th (Service) Battalion and the 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion. The last-named was transferred from Harwich Church and handed over by the Lord Lieutenant to the Bishop of Chelmsford for safe custody on October 31st, 1926. In May, 1927, the colours of the 9th (Service) Battalion, which had been presented by the Prince of Wales in France in 1918, were handed over for safe custody by the Colonel of the Regiment (Major-General F. Ventris, C.B.). The sermon on that occasion was preached by Rev. H. P. Berkeley, M.C., formerly Chaplain of the 12th Division, of which the 9th Battalion formed part. The Church also contains the following memorials : To Major-General Hay, who commanded at Warley, when it was the depot of the East India Company ; to those of the 2nd Essex who lost their lives in Egypt and the Nile Campaign, 1884-6 ; to those of the 1st Battalion who fell

in the South African War, 1899-1902; to Lieut. Francis Newton Parsons, V.C., who was killed at the battle of Driefontein, in 1900; to 185 officers and 3,244 warrant officers, N.C.O's. and men of the 1st and 2nd Battalions who were killed or died of disease in the war of 1914-1919, and to those of the 4th Battalion who also died in that war (stained glass window). The memorial at Alverstoke Church, Hampshire, to officers and men who perished in the Afghan campaign, 1841-42, was removed to the Church in 1926. The wording upon this memorial runs: Sacred to the memory of Colonel T. Mackrell, A.D.C. to Her Majesty, Major W. B. Scott, Captain T. Swaine, Captain R. B. McCrea, Captain T. R. Leighton, Captain T. Robinson, Captain T. C. Collins, Lieut. W. H. Dodgin, Lieut. W. G. White, Lieut. F. M. Wade, Lieut. A. Hogg, Lieut. E. S. Cumberland, Lieut. W. G. Raban, Lieut. H. Cadett, Lieut. S. Swinton, Lieut. F. J. C. Fortye, Lieut. A. W. Gray, Paymaster T. Bourke, Lieut. and Q.M. R. R. Halahan, Surgeon J. Harcourt, Assistant Surgeons W. Balfour, W. Primrose and 645 non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the 44th Regiment, who fell upon the field of battle in the disastrous Afghan War of 1841 and 1842. They sank with arms in their hands unconquered, but overpowered by the united horrors of climate, treachery and barbarous warfare. Their colours, saved by Captain J. Souther, one of the few survivors, hang above this stone, which is erected to their memory by the officers of the 44th Regiment, June, 1844. "And if Thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy because they have sinned against Thee, and shall return and confess Thy name, and pray and make supplication before Thee, then hear Thou from the Heavens and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel.—2nd Chronicles vi, 24, 25." In March, 1927, there was erected on the south side of the Chapel an oak cross from Trones Wood, France, as a memorial of the 53rd Brigade of the 18th Division. It bears the names of the three battalions composing the Brigade, viz., 10th Battalion The Essex Regiment, 8th Battalion The Royal Berkshire Regiment and 7th Battalion The Royal West Kent Regiment, with the 53rd Trench Mortar Battery. The following is the inscription: "To the glory of God and the memory of those of the 53rd Infantry Brigade (18th Division) who fell gloriously in re-taking Trones Wood from the 2nd Guards Grenadier Regiment, 27th August, 1918." An appeal has been issued, with the approval of the Lord Lieutenant, asking the County to contribute the sum of £2,000 for the furnishing and re-seating of the Chapel. Each Battalion of the Regiment, not already having done so, has agreed to present a memorial stained glass window.

AFFILIATED REGIMENTS.

In 1926, in accordance with the official desire that British battalions should be linked with units in the Overseas Dominions, the Essex Regiment was associated with the Essex Fusiliers, Canadian

Militia, with headquarters at Windsor, Ontario. This unit dates from 1866, when the 23rd Essex Battalion of Light Infantry was constituted, with Lieut.-Colonel A. Rankin in command. There were six companies, one each at Windsor (organized in 1862), Sandwich (1862), Leamington (1863), Amherstburg (1863), North Ridge (1861) and Kingsville (1866). The Battalion was removed from the list of active Militia in 1870, because it failed to complete its re-organization, but the Windsor and Leamington companies were retained as independent companies. These two continued to function until 1882, when the Windsor Company was attached to the 24th (Kent) Battalion and the Leamington Company to the 25th (Elgin) Battalion. At the time of the North-West Rebellion the 21st (Essex) Battalion was raised and the two independent companies became the first and second companies of the new unit. The three other companies were formed at Essex Centre, Amherstburg and Windsor respectively. Lieut.-Colonel J. R. Wilkinson was in command. The title was changed in 1887 to 21st Battalion, Essex Fusiliers, and again in 1901 to 21st Regiment, Essex Fusiliers, when it became a city corps, with headquarters at "The Armouries," which were opened at Windsor in the year following. The Battalion in 1904 had an establishment of eight companies, of which only two (Walkerville and Leamington) had headquarters outside Windsor. The Governor-General (the Earl of Elgin) was entertained by the officers of the Battalion when on a visit to Windsor and in 1902 the detachment was invited to Detroit to partake in the festivities consequent upon the visit of President Roosevelt, and was inspected by him. The band of the Coldstream Guards was welcomed in 1903 and that of the Black Watch in 1904. One of the Regiment's most treasured distinctions is that it was the first Canadian regiment, as such, to enter the United States since the American War of Independence, when the members were the guests of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition at St. Louis in 1904 and were there visited by General Cronje, one of the Boer leaders in the South African War. The Fusiliers supplied part of the guard of honour for the Duke and Duchess of York (King George V and Queen Mary) when taking part in the Quebec Tercentenary in 1908.

Upon the outbreak of war in August, 1914, details were called out for home defence duty, which was the protection of the Windsor Armouries. The detachment was originally composed of 14 N.C.O.'s and men, under Sergeant-Major Smith. The duties were increased until by May, 1916, the guard comprised ninety N.C.O.'s and men. When, however, depot battalions were formed in October, 1917, the details were relieved from active service. The Battalion contributed hundreds of recruits to the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Six officers and 223 other ranks were sent in 1914 to the 1st Battalion, C.E.F., and between 200 and 300 other ranks to the 18th Battalion, C.E.F. The 99th

Battalion, C.E.F., was authorized to be raised in December, 1915, in the regimental area, and sailed for England in June, 1916, with a strength of 80 officers and 825 other ranks. In 1915 between 200 and 300 men were enlisted for the 38rd Canadian Battalion, C.E.F. The 241st Battalion, C.E.F., was formed in the regimental area in 1916 and left Canada in April, 1917, with a strength of 21 officers and 625 other ranks. When in April, 1920, the Fusiliers were re-organized into one active and two reserve battalions of four companies each, the 1st perpetuated the 18th Battalion, C.E.F., the 2nd reserve, the 99th Battalion, C.E.F., and the 3rd reserve the 241st Battalion, C.E.F. The 99th and 241st Battalions did not proceed to France, but were used when in England to provide reinforcements to other units in the fighting zone. The 18th Battalion had long and honourable service on the Western Front. It left Canada for England with a strength of 36 officers and 1,081 other ranks and, after a short stay, arrived in France on September 15th, 1915, as part of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division. It was present at the stern fighting at St. Eloi in April, 1916; by a gallant advance of 1,200 yards in September, 1916, with the 4th Brigade, it rendered possible the capture of Courcelette the same evening; took part in the battle of Ancre Heights in October, when it advanced 500 yards north of Courcelette; was with the Canadian Corps in the capture of Vimy Ridge in April, 1917; suffered in the heavy fighting at Hill 70 in August, 1917; supported the attack upon Passchendaele late in 1917; made a determined advance with the Canadian Corps on August 8th, 1918, when it covered 5,000 yards and reached the extreme limit of the objective east of Marcelcave; co-operated with the 19th Battalion in the attack and capture of Fransart on August 16th; fought with the Canadian Corps in the battle of the Scarpe at the end of August, capturing Guemappe, and in five days achieving an advance of seven miles; reached the southern outskirts of Iwuy after crossing the Canal de l'Escaut on October 10th and when the Armistice was declared at 11 a.m. on November 11th, 1918, was at Cipy, immediately south of Mons, marching thence to the Rhine. The Battalion returned to the south of Brussels, Belgium, in January, 1919, and in April was transferred, with the other units of the 2nd Division, to England, and thence to Canada for demobilization. The 1st Battalion, C.E.F., was raised in Western Ontario and was composed of drafts from 16 Militia regiments, including the Essex Fusiliers, sailing with the first Canadian contingent in September, 1914. It was ordered to France in February, 1915, and was in reserve in April at Vlamertinghe, when the German gas attack temporarily broke the line, and it was pushed forward to fill the gap, suffering heavy casualties in the operation.

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companies in Windsor, with "A" Company in Walkerville, but in 1924 the Walkerville Company was transferred to Windsor, so that the Battalion was concentrated there.

The successive lieut.-colonels commanding the Essex Fusiliers have been : J. R. Wilkinson (1885-91), J. H. Beattie (1891-97), J. C. Guillot (1897-1902), N. A. Bartlet (1902-08), F. H. Laing (1908-12), E. S. Wigle (1912-15), S. C. Robinson (1915-24), G. H. Wilkinson (1924).

The 44th Battalion Australian Military Forces made a proposal of alliance with 1st Bn. The Essex Regiment in 1927, which was accepted, War Office approval being subsequently obtained. The Australian 44th has an honourable and interesting history. The Fremantle Rifle Volunteers were formed prior to the establishment of the Commonwealth Government and later became known as the Western Australian Infantry Regiment. When compulsory training was introduced the units were reorganized and the Regiment was then numbered the 86th. Many of the members of the corps, as successively designated, served in Egypt, Soudan and South Africa, and earned for the Regiment the battle honour "South Africa, 1899-1902." At the close of the war of 1914-1919 all the regiments were re-numbered to commemorate the battalions constituting the Australian Imperial Force. Thus it was that the 86th became the 16th Battalion, A.I.F., and received the latter's colours. Another re-organization subsequently caused the Battalion to be known as the 44th and accorded the right of carrying on the traditions of the 44th Battalion, A.I.F. The latter had been raised early in 1916. It was organized and trained in Western Australia and embarked for England on June 6th, 1916. There it was part of the 3rd Australian Division, then on Salisbury Plain. The Battalion was sent to France late in November and, after a spell of trench warfare, had its first experience of offensive operations at the Battle of Messines in June, 1917, when there were over 300 casualties. Thereafter to the close of the war the 44th were heavily engaged, notably in the fight for Passchendaele, the struggle to save Amiens and the victorious advance, which took them to Bapaume and over the Hindenburg Line. The Battalion lost 433 killed and 1,346 wounded in its two years of its service, during which it claims never to have sacrificed a trench and, whilst capturing hundreds of prisoners, to have lost only eight to the enemy. The 44th has a remarkable post-war record for shooting and in 1925-26 it not only did well in competitions open to all Australia, but was the best shooting battalion in the brigade, also having the best shooting company and the best individual shot.

COLONELS OF THE 44th REGIMENT OF FOOT.

Colonel James Long, 1741-1743.
 Colonel John Lee, 1748-1751.
 Colonel Sir Peter Halkett, Bart., 1751-1755.
 Colonel Robert Ellison, 1755-1756.
 Major-General James Abercromby, 1756-1781.
 Major-General Charles Rainsford, 1781-1809.
 General Sir Thomas Trigge, Bart., 1809-1814.
 General the Earl of Suffolk, 1814-1820.
 Lieut.-General Gore Browne, 1820-1843.
 Lieut.-General the Hon. Patrick Stuart, 1843-1855.
 Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Ashworth, 1855-1858.
 General Sir Thomas Reed, K.C.B., 1858-1884.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING THE 44th
REGIMENT.

Sir Peter Halkett, Bart, 1741-1755 (killed in action).
 The Hon. Thomas Gage, 1755-1758.
 William Farquhar, 1758-1759.
 William Eyre, 1759-1764.
 James Agnew, 1764-1777 (killed in action).
 Henry Hope, 1777-1789.
 William John Darley, 1789-1793.
 Robert Riddell, 1793-1796.
 David Ogilvie, 1796-1801 (killed in action).
 Kenneth McKenzie, 1801-1803.
 Alexander Dirom, 1803-1804.
 Sir Arthur Brooke, K.C.B., 1804-1819.¹
 Sir George Henry Frederick Berkeley, 1819-1821.
 Joseph Wanton Morrison, 1821-1825 (died of cholera at sea
 after Burmese War).
 J. Chilton L. Carter, 1825-1827.
 John Shelton, 1827-1845.²
 Hon. Augustus Almeric Spencer, 1845-1856.
 Charles Dunbar Staveley, 1856-1865.³

1. Colonel Sir Arthur Brooke commanded the 1st Battalion when ordered to America in 1814 and was a brigadier in the expeditionary force until Sir Patrick Ross was killed in September, when he became commander of the force. He was a brigadier in the attack upon New Orleans in 1815, when General Sir E. Pakenham was in command. The acting command of the Battalion was held by the Hon. Thomas Mullins, who, himself, was a temporary brigadier in September, 1814, at the battle near Baltimore. Major Johnson was in acting command of the Battalion on that occasion.
2. Lieut.-Colonel Shelton was a local brigadier-general and major-general in the East Indies from January, 1839, to January, 1842, and Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Mackrell was, therefore, in command of the Regiment during the fighting at Kabul, as a result of which he died from wounds in November, 1841. During the retreat Colonel Shelton resumed command of the Regiment.
3. Colonel Staveley was only in nominal command of the Regiment for several years before his retirement from that position in 1865, he being constantly on staff employ, and Lieut.-Colonel MacMahon was in command in his absence.

William MacMahon, 1865-1866.
John Josiah Hort, 1866-1869.
Andrew Browne, 1869-1871.
Thomas Raikes, 1871-1875.
Richard Preston, 1875-1876.
John Sidney Hand, 1876-1881.

**LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING 2nd BATTALION OF
THE 44th REGIMENT.**

Thomas Nichol, 1803-1804.
Robert Garden, 1804-1809.
Sir Charles Bulkeley Egerton, Bart., 1809-1811.
Hon. George Carleton, 1811-1814 (killed in action).
John Millet Hamerton, 1814-1816.

**LIEUT.-COLONELS OF RESERVE BATTALION OF THE
44th REGIMENT.**

James Oliphant Clunie, 1847-1848.
Augustus Halifax Ferryman, 1848-1849.
Edward Thorpe, 1849-1850.

COLONELS OF THE 56th REGIMENT OF FOOT.

Major-General Lord Charles Manners, 1755-1761.
Lieut.-General the Hon. William Keppel, 1761-1765.
Lieut.-General James Durand, 1765-1766.
General Hunt Walsh, 1766-1795.
F.M. Sir Samuel Hulse, 1795-1797.
General the Hon. Chapple Norton, 1797-1818.
General Sir John Murray, Bart., 1818-1827.
Lieut.-General Lord Aylmer, K.C.B., 1827-1832.
Lieut.-General Sir Hudson Lowe, K.C.B., G.C.M.G.,
1832-1842.
Lieut.-General the Earl of Westmorland, K.C.B., G.C.H.,
1842-1859.
Lieut.-General John Home Home, 1859-1860.
General H. W. Breton, 1860.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING THE 56th REGIMENT.

Peter Parr, 1755-1760.
John Doyne, 1760-1762.
James Stewart, February-September, 1762 (died on active
service).
Alexander Monypenny, 1762-1776.
John Caulfield, 1776-1778.
Henry Johnson, 1778-1779.

Peter Craig, 1779-1799.¹
 Philip K. Skinner, 1799-1815.²
 Fletcher Barclay, 1815-1831.
 Howell Harris Prichard, 1831-1836.
 George Morton Eden, 1836-1839.
 Robert O'Hara, July-August, 1839.
 William Hassell Eden, 1839-1854.
 Souldon Oakeley, 1854-1856.³
 Richard Walter Lacy, 1856-1869.
 George William Patey, 1869-1873.
 George Frederick Berry, 1873-1878.
 Francis Charles Hill, 1878-1881.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING 2nd BATTALION OF THE 56th REGIMENT.

Henry Samuel Keating, 1804-1812.⁴
 Nigel Kingscote, 1812-1818.

1. Although Lieut.-Colonel Peter Craig was upon the muster rolls as lieut.-colonel commanding for twenty years, he was not present with the Regiment for the greater part of the time. He was advanced successively to the ranks of Colonel, 1782; Major-General, 1783, and Lieut.-General, 1798. He signed the musters in 1793, but after that appears to have been on leave. There are very few muster rolls of the Regiment extant before muster books were used in 1798, when Craig was still commanding the Regiment, but on leave in Europe. He was transferred to the command of the 62nd Foot in 1799 and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel P. K. Skinner from the 23rd Foot. Major Bulleine Fancourt was in command of the Regiment during the siege of Gibraltar, 1779-1783, and for his services there received the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel. Other officers who probably had command of the Regiment were Lieut.-Colonel William Earle Bulwer, 1795, and John Whitwell, 1796. When the latter died Lieut.-Colonel Picton (General Sir Thomas Picton) was placed upon the strength as lieut.-colonel, the Regiment then being in the West Indies. This distinguished officer probably never served with the 56th, for he was constantly employed upon staff appointments thereafter, but he was returned as having a company in 1799, as the custom for a field officer then was, and he remained on the musters till November 25th, 1812. The reason for the apparent anomaly in respect of Lieut.-Colonel Peter Craig is thus explained by Major H. G. Parkyn: "Towards the end of 1795 the establishment of Regiments was increased to 12 companies, the two extra companies being formed for depot purposes, and as I find it is in nearly every case that the additional lieut.-colonel's commission is dated during this year, it is fairly evident, I think, that he (Craig) nominally commanded what was in reality a depot."
2. Lieut.-Colonel P. K. Skinner was appointed Colonel in 1809 and Major-General in 1812. In that year he became Q.M.G., India, and when he left for that appointment Brevet Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher Barclay appears to have been in acting command for some time. He was confirmed in the position in 1815. When he returned to the 1st Battalion at Bellary, India, in 1810, he was entertained to dinner by the officers in honour of his promotion to Colonel. The custom of those days is illustrated in a War Office list of field officers in 1814, when the following were returned: P. K. Skinner, m.g., 11th December, 1799; F. Barclay, s., 27th June, 1811; (2) Nigel Kingscote, 17 O.; B. Travers, m.g., 2nd January, 1812; (3) J. F. Brown, 3rd March; Henry Sullivan, 1st July, 1813, and (3) J. W. Mallet, 6th November.
3. Lieut.-Colonel Oakeley died in October, 1856. He was returned as lieut.-colonel commanding from 1854 to 1856, but he was not with the Regiment in July, 1855, for Major Samuel Symes Cox then signed the musters and Lieut.-Colonel Lacy succeeded Cox in May, 1856.
4. Lieut.-Colonel Keating was Major in the 56th Regiment in 1800 and commanded the 2nd Battalion in 1804. He signed the musters of the 2nd Battalion from 1805 to 1808, but from August, 1809, to July, 1812, was absent on special service. It is improbable he returned to the Regiment, for after he was wounded in operations for the capture of Mauritius he was transferred to the command of the Bourbon Regiment in that year.

LIEUT.-COLONEL COMMANDING 3rd BATTALION OF
THE 56th REGIMENT.

John Frederick Brown, 1813-1814.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING RESERVE BATTALION
OF THE 56th REGIMENT.

Peter Shadwell Norman, 1846-1849.

Edmund William Wilton Passey, 1849-1850.

COLONELS OF THE ESSEX REGIMENT.

- { General Sir Thomas Reed, G.C.B., 1858-1884.
- { General Henry William Breton, 1860-1889.
- General Sir Charles W. D. Staveley, K.C.B., 1884-1896.
- General Sir Archibald Alison, Bt., G.C.B., 1896-1897.
- Lieut.-General the Hon. J. J. Bourke, 1897-1904.
- Major-General F. Ventris, C.B., 1904.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING 1st BATTALION OF
THE ESSEX REGIMENT.

Charles Rennie, 1881-1885.

Constantine Maguire, 1885-1887.

Reinhold Baker Bald, 1887-1891.

William W. Wood, 1891-1895.

Theodore E. Stephenson, 1895-1900.

Cyril Wood, 1900-1904.¹

W. G. Carter, 1904-1908.

Henry Broadmead, 1908-1912.

F. Gore Anley, 1912-1913.

O. G. Godfrey Faussett, 1913-1915 (killed in action).²

C. G. Lewes, January-September, 1919.

F. W. Moffitt, 1919-1923.

A. B. Incledon Webber, 1923.

LIEUT.-COLONELS COMMANDING 2nd BATTALION OF
THE ESSEX REGIMENT.

A. Greenland, 1882-1883 (died at Gibraltar).

William Richard White, 1883-1886.

Almeric G. Spencer, 1886-1891.

T. Prickett, 1891-1895.

1. During considerable periods of the South African War the Battalion was commanded by Major F. J. Brown (Colonel F. J. Brown, C.B.), including the battles of Paardeberg and Driefontein and the advance to Koomati Poort.
2. In the war 1914-1919 the Battalion was successively commanded by Lieut.-Colonel O. G. Godfrey Faussett (killed May, 1915), Lieut.-Colonels or acting Lieut.-Colonels H. R. Rice, May-August, 1915; G. M. Tufnell, September, 1915; A. V. Clutterbuck, September, 1915-April, 1916; A. C. Halahan, July, 1916-April, 1917; Sir George Stirling, Bart., April, 1917-April, 1918; A. R. C. Sanders, April-September, 1918, and T. J. E. Blake, September-December, 1918. There were four other temporary commanders, but they acted for periods of less than a month.

D. A. Blest, 1895-1899.
 T. Stock, 1899-1902.
 F. J. Brown, 1902-1906.
 R. J. Tudway, 1906-1910.
 L. R. Carleton, 1910-1918.
 F. Gore Anley, 1918-1914.¹
 A. P. Churchill, 1919-1924.
 C. R. Roberts West, 1924.

Officers were present at the following battles and sieges :—

44th.

Storm of Badajos, 1812: Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. George Carleton (killed whilst commanding a brigade at Bergen-op-Zoom, 1814), Captains John Berwick (w.), Adam Brugh (w.), John Cruice, F. Elwin, J. C. Guthrie, F. B. Jervoise (k.), J. Jessop, Lieutenants Mathew Argent (k.), Robert Grier, Charles Keane, William Fitzman Lennon, Thomas Mackrell, W. H. Meade (k., Bergen-op-Zoom, 1814), R. Peacocke, (w.), William Pearce (w.), L. J. Penton, J. P. Shaw, T. F. Sinclair (w.), W. S. Unthank (k.), Ensigns John O'Reilly, William Standley and Assistant Surgeon J. Collins.

Battle of Salamanca, 1812: Brevet Lieut.-Colonel George Hardinge, Captains John Berwick (k.), A. Brugh (w.), F. Elwin, J. C. Guthrie, J. Jessop, Lieutenants H. Elwin (d. of w., retreat from Burgos, 1812), Robert Grier, Charles Keane, Thomas Mackrell, W. H. Meade, William Pearce (w.), L. J. Penton, J. P. Shaw, Michael Scott (d. of w., retreat from Burgos, 1812), Ensigns John O'Reilly, William Standley (k.), Quartermaster Henry Jones, Assistant Surgeon J. Collins and Sergeant-Major J. Christie.

Battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo, 1815: Lieut.-Colonel John Millet Hamerton (w., Q.B.), Major G. O'Malley (s.w., W.), Major J. Jessop, Captains A. Brugh (w., W.), David Power, (w., Q.B.), William Burney (w., Q.B.), H. Mildmay Fane (w., Q.B.), Lieutenants Robert Russell (w., Q.B.), Ralph John Twinberrow, Robert Grier (w., Q.B.), William Tomkins (k., Q.B.), William Burrough Strong (w., Q.B.), John Campbell (s.w., Q.B.), Nicholas Toler Kingsley, James Burke (s.w., W.), Henry Martin, William Marcus Hern (w., Q.B.), Alexander Reddock, Ensigns James Christie (w., Q.B.), B. Whitney (w., Q.B. and W.), Gillespie Dunlevie, Peter Cooke (k., Q.B.), Thomas McCann (Adjutant, w., W.), James Carnegie Webster (w., Q.B.), Alexander

1. During the war the following officers commanded the Battalion for the periods stated: Lieut.-Colonels or acting Lieut.-Colonels G. M. Tufnell, September, 1914-January, 1915; L. O. W. Jones, January-November, 1915; Sir George Stirling, Bart., November, 1915-November, 1916; R. N. Thompson, November, 1916-January, 1917; S. G. Mullock, January-February, 1917; A. G. Pratt, February-March, 1917; S. G. Mullock, March-April, 1917 (killed in action); N. M. S. Irwin, April-May, 1917; R. N. Thompson, May-August, 1917; A. G. Pratt, August-October, 1917; R. N. Thompson, October-December, 1917; J. W. Watkins, January, 1918; R. N. Thompson, January-May, 1918; A. E. Maitland, May-November, 1918.

Wilson (w., Q.B.), Paymaster James Williams, Quartermaster Henry Jones, Surgeon Oliver Halpin, Assistant Surgeons John Collins and William Newton. Major Fountain Elwin, Captains John Cleland Guthrie and George Crozier, Lieutenants George Newberry and Robert Peacocke were detained at Ostend as members of a general court-martial, Brevet Lieut.-Colonel Gregory was commandant at Ostend, Lieut. Frederick Hemming was acting engineer and Lieut. Temple Frederick Sinclair was town adjutant. These officers were, therefore, not eligible for the Waterloo Medal.

56th.

Siege of Gibraltar, 1779-1782 : Major Fancourt Bulleine (in command), Major John Barker, Major John Hardy, Major John Hallows, Captains John Cassan, Meredith Chambers, Henry Hamilton, Samuel Moore, John Pigot, Rice Price, Wyndham Quin, Charles Valletot (or Vallotton), Captain Lieutenant James Willerd ; Lieutenants James Barrington, John Chapman, Thomas Jackson, E. J. Fancourt, T. Nixon, Fred Page, Charles Roberts, Edward Vicars, Richard White, Samuel Wood, Ensigns Bradshaw, Francis Craig, Richard Edgar Gyllett, Edward Harling, Benjamin Johnson and George Johnstone, with Chaplain Charles O'Niel and Surgeon Thomas Chisholme.



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2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment (56th), The Pompadours.

THE formation of the 56th Regiment of Foot—later to be known as the West Essex and then as the 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment—was ordered when its now linked battalion, the 44th, was fighting under General Braddock, in America. The threat of French dominion, both in European waters and across the Atlantic, prelude to the Seven Years' War, roused the British Government to considerable military activity and in December, 1755, ten new regiments of infantry were added to the establishment, the nucleus being found in supplementary companies which had been recruited for existing units. Lord Charles Manners, ninth son of the second Duke of Rutland, and formerly Lieut.-Colonel to the Third Foot Guards, was commissioned as Colonel on December 26th, 1755, to raise the seventh of these new regiments, which, originally numbered the 58th, was known from 1757 as the 56th, owing to two regiments having been disbanded. The men were recruited in the North of England, principally from Newcastle and Gateshead, and early in 1756 the Regiment was complete, with ten companies, each of 78 N.C.O.'s and men. The coat was of scarlet, with facings of deep crimson. The latter colour was changed to purple in 1764, when the Regiment was quartered in Dublin. The breeches and accoutrements were of white. The shade of purple chosen was known as "Pompadour," then famed as the favourite colour of Mdme. de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV (who had recently died), and probably for this reason the 56th became known as the "Pompadours" or "Saucy Pompeys." Whatever the origin of the name, when the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland signified his approval, on the King's behalf, in 1764, the change was to a "purple colour" and when the matter came up again in 1784, upon the return of the Regiment from Gibraltar, Colonel Craig, then in command, was informed by the Adjutant General, writing from Great George Street, London, "I took this day the King's commands upon the subject of your clothing, when his Majesty was pleased to order that the colour of your facing should be the purple blue of which you gave me a pattern loop and which I believe you wear at present."

The officers in 1756 were: Lieut.-Colonel, Peter Parr; major, John Doyne; captains, James Stewart, William Skipton, William Playstowe, William Earl of Sutherland, Thomas Hargrave, John Heighington, John Deaken; captain-lieutenant, Francis

Gregor; lieutenants, Wilson Marshall, John Forster, Thomas Harrison, Edwin Eyre, John White, James Perrin, John Ingram, John Archer, David Dundas, St. John Pierce Lacy; ensigns, John Brereton, Edward Jenkins, James Lyons, Archibald Wight, Joseph Baillie, William Sandys, Fiennes Jenkinson, Christopher Hales, John Woodford; chaplain, John Halsted; adjutant, John Hardy; quartermaster, William Lamplow; surgeon, William Pitman. Lieut.-Colonel Peter Parr was a tried soldier, who was commissioned to the 82nd Foot on November 1st, 1726, and continued to serve in that regiment until he became major in the 18th Foot, in 1752, from which he was gazetted to the 56th in 1755. He was transferred to the 4th Foot in 1760 and retired from active service two years later. A portion of Parr's service with the 82nd Regiment was spent in Essex. In 1734 the latter's headquarters were at Chelmsford, with detachments at Dunmow, Brentwood and Grays. The 32nd were in reserve at Dettingen (1748) and at Fontenoy (1745) and Parr was probably present at both battles, though he is not specifically mentioned as being there. Other service of the 32nd, in which Parr may be presumed to have shared, was in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the "45" and in Flanders the following year under Sir John Ligonier. The unit was again at Chelmsford in 1748. The most noteworthy name among the officers was that of Lieut. David Dundas (later General Sir David Dundas, K.B.), who, at the close of the American Revolutionary War, published "Principles of Military Movements." At that time the looser formations which were necessary for warfare in America were in conflict with the more precise and cumbrous methods of field-exercise, of which the Prussians in that day were the leading exponents. Dundas's system aimed at flexibility of manœuvre whilst preserving stability of formation. Each company was divided into two platoons and each platoon into two sub-divisions. "In effect this drill-book of Dundas has been the foundation of all similar books that have since been issued. Perhaps its most valuable feature was that it laid down for the first time instructions for teaching the recruit how to march, his step being regulated by pace-stick and plummet. . . . There was, however, so much that was rigid, formal and unnecessary in Dundas's drill that it gained for him the nickname of 'Old Pivot'; while he also made the fatal mistake of distributing the whole science of military evolution into eighteen manœuvres, which were a sad stumbling-block to slow-witted officers. 'General,' said Sir John Moore to him, in 1804, 'that book of yours has done a great deal of good and would be of great value if it were not for those damned eighteen manœuvres.' 'Why-ay,' answered Dundas, slowly in broad Scots, 'blockheads don't understand!' We shall see in due time that Moore sifted out all that was best,

both of Prussian teaching and of American experience, for the training of the Light Division; meanwhile, it is sufficient to impress upon the reader that we owe our adoption of double in lieu of triple rank—a very notable matter in our military history—to the American War.”¹

RECRUITING THE REGIMENT.

It is fortunate that full details have been preserved of the formation of the Regiment. Recruiting was active in Northumberland and Durham, particularly at Newcastle and Gateshead, and the newspapers of that period, *Newcastle Intelligencer*, *Newcastle Journal* and *Newcastle Courant*, printed constant references thereto. Early in 1756 special efforts had been made in the district to obtain men for the Royal Irish Regiment, but late in February it was announced that the recruiting officer had orders to leave, for the nucleus of Lord Charles Manners' new regiment was expected to arrive, “who, none being to interfere with them, will have a fair opportunity of raising men speedily.” Before the end of the month 100 men of the Royal Irish appeared as the first instalment of the Regiment, probably including many of the men who had been recently raised in Newcastle and vicinity. On February 24th, we are informed, “the Hon. Colonel Parr, Major Doyne, the Right Hon. the Earl of Sutherland, Lieut. Eyre (who came express from Dublin) and Ensign Brayerton (? Brereton) formed the 58th New Regiment in Gateshead, commanded by the Right Hon. Lord Charles Manners, since which several drafts from other regiments have arrived and joined the said corps.” There was a beat-up for recruits, which met with success, and on February 27th 120 non-commissioned officers and men from Colonel Holm's regiment marched in to join the nucleus of the Royal Irish, so that within a few days the Regiment was actually in being. County meetings were announced for Durham and Northumberland, that for the latter county being held on March 26th, at the Moot Hall. The Earl of Northumberland was met “by the greatest number of gentlemen of distinction and property ever known here on any occasion, when his Lordship made a pathetick speech, wherein he set forth the necessity of speedily recruiting His Majesty's land forces at this important juncture,” and the gentlemen present “were all unanimous in executing their utmost on this important occasion.”

There appeared accordingly an advertisement which shows the energy which was put into the recruiting movement and the terms upon which the men were enlisted, for it ran: “All persons who are willing to serve their King and Country at this time and will engage themselves in the 58th Regiment of Foot, commanded by the Right Hon. the Lord Charles Manners, now

1. “History of the Army,” p. 539-40, Vol. III. (*Fortescue*).

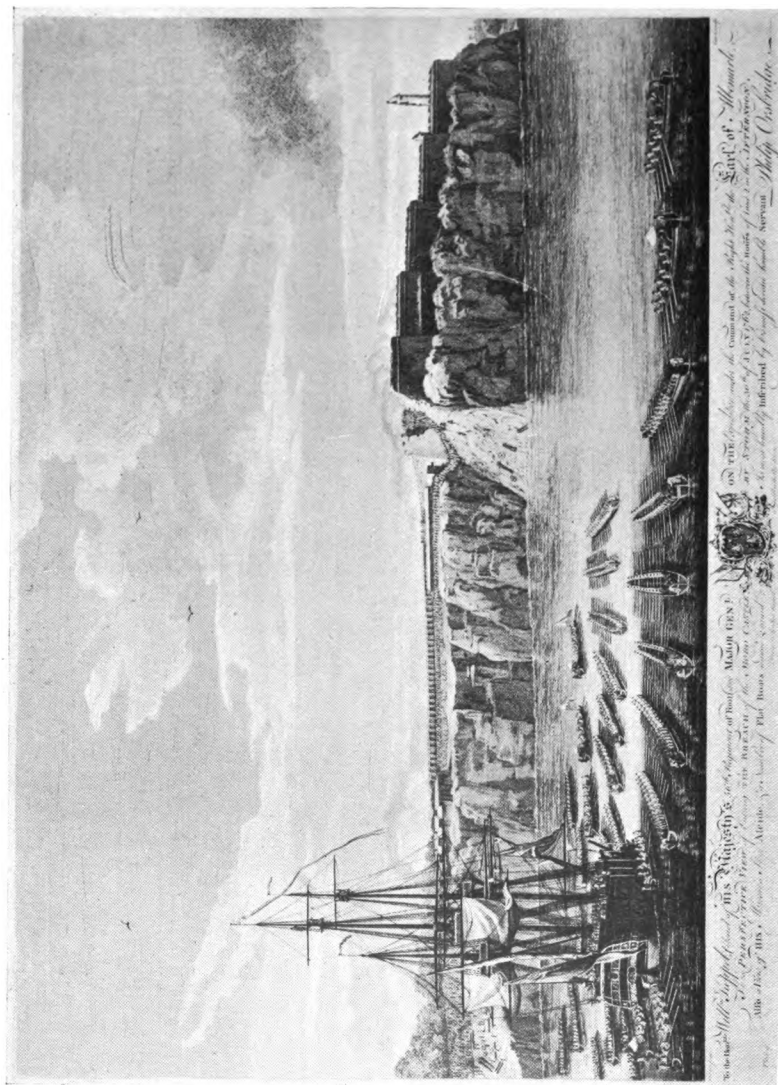
quartered at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and recruiting in the several market towns in Northumberland, will receive for their inlisting money two guineas, free from all deductions, if they are five feet eight inches high or upwards, and one guinea and a half if they are five feet five inches high or upwards, and half a guinea more to supply them with necessaries on their joining the regiment. And, as a further encouragement, the Earl of Northumberland hereby offers a reward of one guinea, over and above what is given by the recruiting officer, to every able-bodied man who shall be willing to inlist in the said regiment; and shall apply for that purpose to Lieut.-Colonel Parr, commanding officer, at Newcastle; to Mr. James Scott, at Alnwick Castle; to Mr. Gabriel Hall, at Morpeth; to Mr. Robert Lowes, at Hexham, or to Mr. Gabriel Readhead, at Rothbury, who will pay the same to each person who shall inlist accordingly. And all such persons shall have the further privilege (if it is their choice not to inlist for life) to be engaged only for the term of three years or during the continuance of a war with France; at the expiration of which they shall be entitled to their discharge."

Other advertisements outlined what individual residents were prepared to do. In addition to the offers by the commanding officer, the Earl of Northumberland gave a guinea to each recruit. Sir W. B. Blackett was also willing to hand over a guinea, his agents being Mr. Edward Roberts, Hexham; Mr. Richmond, Newcastle; Mr. Robson, Wallington; Mr. John Peart, Newhouse-in-Weardale, and Mr. Caleb Hunter, Allenheads. Mr. Matthew Ridley, at Heaton, promised the same amount, as did the Newcastle Corporation, the Duke of Portland (his agent being Mr. Samuel Marrior, at Morpeth), Mr. Matthew White, of Blagdon, High Sheriff; Mr. Wm. Ord, of Fenham (his agent being Mr. George Cuthbertson, Newcastle-on-Tyne); Mr. Thomas Airey and Mr. William Scott, both of Newcastle-on-Tyne. So numerous were these offers that a notice was specially published stating that recruits would be only entitled to one guinea in addition to the recruiting officer's payment. There was similar activity in Durham, the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Darlington, holding a meeting in April to report the progress made. Offers of a guinea to those enlisting were made by the Lord Lieutenant; Mr. George Elleray, steward, on behalf of the Bishop of Durham; Mr. Peter Boulby, registrar to the Dean and Chapter of Durham; the Corporation of Durham (later raised to two guineas); Mr. Robert Shafto, of Whitworth; Mr. Henry Lambton (agent, Mr. Thomas Hall, Lambton), also one guinea annually to each recruit or his family; Mr. John Tempest, Winyard (agents, Thomas Tempest, Stephen Barber, at Winyard, or Ald. Dun, Durham); Major-General Cuthbert Ellison (agent, Mr. Thomas Sill, Gateshead Park), whilst Mr. Ralph Carr, of Cocken, offered two guineas, his agents being Mr. William Heppell, Cocken,

Mr. Charles Cotesworth, St. Helen Auckland, and Mr. William Peverell, Durham. The Corporation of Berwick announced, too, a gift of a guinea to each recruit. Others also giving similar rewards were Earls of Carlisle and Tankerville, Lord Ravensworth, Sir William Middleton, Bart., Sir Henry Grey, Bart., Mr. George Bowes and Mr. Lancelot Allgood. Many of these families are still well-known in the North. Sir Wm. Blackett was Mayor of Newcastle and a prominent street was named after him; the Riddleys and the Whites are now represented by the present family of Lord Ridley of Blagdon; the Shaftos are still actively interested in Durham; Mr. Henry Lambton bore the family name of the Earls of Durham; Mr. John Tempest was an ancestor of the present Earl of Londonderry; the Ellison family played a notable part in the life of Newcastle for 200 years and there are descendants still living in the county; Sir Wm. Middleton was presumably of the family still living at Belsay Castle, Northumberland, and Sir Henry Grey may have kinship with the present Earl Grey and Viscount Grey of Fallodon. There was prospect that compulsion would be applied, for it was announced that unless a sufficient number of volunteers offered themselves in a few days the Press Act would be put into "strict execution in the counties of Durham, Newcastle and Northumberland." The application of this law was never seriously intended, for the Regiment was completed during April, "with good and able men to the satisfaction and pleasure of the officers." As early as April 10th it was stated the establishment was almost reached, "a circumstance which has given great pleasure to all lovers of liberty and the British Constitution; and as this success evinces the utility and true means of effecting every such immediate purpose with a free people, it is to be hoped such measures will always be pursued, which will effectually preserve our freedom and render inviolable our sacred Magna Charta."

Mr. Lancelot Allgood was most active in raising men, bringing in thirty-two in two parties. The Vicar of Simonburn (Rev. Mr. Westall) was responsible for fifteen recruits, whilst Mr. Henry Lambton enlisted twelve miners in one day, this despite activity among them on behalf of the Royal Artillery. The Earl of Northumberland specially congratulated Hexham on the success of its efforts and after a dinner to the chief inhabitants his Lordship and the company "paraded the streets with town's musick," as a result of which several volunteers were enrolled. Pride was taken in the quality of the recruits, for "they are none of those ragged and dissolute fellows which the hurry of raising new regiments on emergencies generally are." The Regiment was complete on Tuesday, April 20th, having been raised in 25 days, which it was said "reflects honour and credit on the nobility and gentry in the North, both as patriots and fast friends to the present Royal Family at this alarming juncture,

superior to what has been shown in any other part of the Kingdom, no regiment having been completed in so short a time." Nevertheless, the Regiment was pleased to receive early in May fifty "brave stout Highland recruits," raised by the Earl of Sutherland. The men were then described as being very alert in their discipline and active and earnest in exercising the musket. Declaration of war upon France was officially notified by the Mayor (Mr. William Clifton) on May 22nd and on June 5th, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales' birthday, 300 men of the Regiment were paraded in the Bigg Market (a broad street in Newcastle, still frequented by cheapjacks with their stalls) in their new uniforms, arms and accoutrements, and fired three volleys. Afterwards the officers assembled at the "Black Bull and Post Boy," "where an elegant entertainment was provided for them." The thirtieth anniversary of the King's accession later in the month was welcomed by the ringing of bells and at noon a party of the Regiment fired three volleys on the Sandhill, a street leading to the Quay; Sandgate, if not Sandhill, is mentioned in the well-known Newcastle song, "The Keelrow." They performed the same compliment at the back of the Mayor's house, "when they made three remarkable fine fires, superior to any made by the veterans for some years past." Lord Charles Manners arrived and inspected the Regiment on July 12th on Town Moor, when "they performed their exercise and firing with great exactness and to the entire satisfaction of his Lordship." Presents in money amounting to nearly fifty guineas were made to the men. At the dinner which followed at the "Bull and Postboy" Lord Charles Manners complimented the officers on having made his regiment as fit for duty as any in his Majesty's service. The ensuing Thursday (July 15th) his Lordship gave a ball to the prominent residents in appreciation of the efforts which they had made. In August a local sensation was provided by the discovery that one of the recruits enlisted into the Regiment was a woman from Redwater (Rede Water), Northumberland. "She was set at liberty on returning the enlisting money, but seemed greatly dissatisfied that she could not be allowed to serve his Majesty in either the Army or Navy, having some time before enlisted on board a man of war." In September a sham fight was held on Town Moor at which the men "behaved with such dexterity and skill that their commanding officer declared he would head it against any regiment in Europe." This training was in preparation for the visit of General Lord George Beauclerk, who, late in October, reviewed the Regiment on the Town Moor, where it went through the manual exercise and several movements to the General's satisfaction and had a present of ten guineas from the officers to drink the King's health. A field return, dated October 28th, 1756, stated that only a surgeon's mate, a corporal and 34 privates were wanted to complete the establishment.



The last service of the corps in Newcastle was guarding 38 smugglers who were captured in February, 1757, for in April it marched away to Berwick and thence to Scotland. There were a few cases of desertion during the stay in Northumbria and advertisements were issued giving rewards for their apprehension. One man, aged 46, was stated to have been born in Wellington, Shropshire, whilst another left his regimental hat, coat and waistcoat, but took with him his breeches; a third man, of Jedburgh, disappeared in a plaid waistcoat and a pair of leather breeches; yet another man who was born in Norfolk, "by trade a barber and periwig maker, went off in a dark brown frock, leather breeches and silver-laced hat"; a Warkworth man, whose father kept an alehouse there, was stated to be a player on the violin; another "appears very much like a gentleman's servant"; another was a schoolmaster; three or four others hailed from Scotland, whilst a man from Nelson, Lancashire, was described as a "tumbler or posture maker."

Seven companies of the 56th were in Dundee in April, 1757, and four companies were detached to Fort Augustus in the May following. In September of the same year the ten companies were reduced to nine, a grenadier and eight battalion companies, with an establishment of 42 officers, including a surgeon and two mates, and 992 non-commissioned officers and men. The latter also embraced the fifiers of the grenadiers. The Regiment apparently went to Fort William later in the year, for the military authorities in Scotland, when outlining a novel recruiting scheme, hoped that Lord Charles Manners had got safely to that stronghold before the bad weather came on. This scheme proposed to raise men by county quotas, 219 to be found for the 56th from Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Cromarty, Ross, Inverness, Argyle and Dumbarton. The probabilities are that this ingenious proposal never fructified; when it was communicated it was only "in agitation." In May, 1758, four companies were at Aberdeen, with companies at Braemar, Cullen, Banff and Peterhead. In 1759—the year of Minden—it sent a detachment to the Continent to strengthen the British regiments serving under Ferdinand. By November of that year companies were stationed at Glasgow, Greenock and Paisley, but in July, 1760, the Regiment embarked at Leith for Hilsa barracks, under Lieut.-Colonel John Doyne. Whilst at the latter station Colonel the Hon. William Keppel, son of the Earl of Albemarle, succeeded Lord Charles Manners in the colonelcy.

SERVICE IN HAVANA.

The 56th first saw service at the capture of Havana, in Cuba, in 1762, and for the gallant part they played in the seizure of Fort Moro, the main defence of the city, they bear on their regimental colours the word "Moro," a distinction granted to very few regiments which served in that campaign. The capture

was the culmination of the British operations in the West Indies during the Seven Years' War. A strong force had already occupied Martinique. The British fleet had secured ascendancy over that of France in West Indian waters when the declaration of war by Spain opened Cuba to attack, the richest prize of all. The British army employed was commanded by the Earl of Albemarle and comprised the force under Monckton, which was in garrison in Martinique, four regiments from England and a contingent from America. The 56th (Lieut.-Colonel James Stewart) sailed from Portsmouth with Lord Albemarle on March 6th, 1762, having a strength of 933, and arrived off Martinique on April 25th. There they became part of the 1st Brigade, with four companies of the Royals and 3/60th, under Brigadier-General de Haviland, who had done good work in the capture of Martinique. The light infantry and grenadier companies were taken away and included, as was customary, in a light infantry battalion and a grenadier battalion. By June 6th the fleet lay off Havana. The accomplishment of this feat was the result of masterly naval strategy, conceived by Lord Anson, the First Sea Lord, and executed by Admiral Sir George Pocock. An alternative route to Havana was by the Old Bahama Channel, but "from its intricacies and dangers it was regarded as impracticable for the unweatherly fleets of those days and was never used by the Spaniards except for quite small craft. But Anson had in his possession—booty probably of his adventurous youth—an old Spanish chart of it, and it convinced him that under such a man as Pocock a British fleet could pass by. It was, at least, too fine a stroke of strategy not to try. Not only would the line of advance be wholly unexpected, but it would be quicker. It involved no beat back, it was before the wind the whole way and it was much shorter. While, therefore, it would ensure a surprise, it would also mean a great gain of time before the hurricanes set in. And, over and above all this, it would permit a sudden and unlooked-for concentration interposed between the two bases of the enemy : it would provide for the rapid junction of the American contingent and it would probably prevent the Spanish and the French fleets joining hands." No hitch occurred during the passage and when, on June 6th, Pocock's sails were seen from the top of Moro Castle, "an officer hurried across the harbour to tell the news in the city, he was reprimanded for spreading false alarms." On that same evening, at home, Lord Anson lay dying, unconscious of the success achieved by the men who, three years before, had also sailed the uncharted St. Lawrence and enabled Wolfe to capture Quebec. The troops quietly landed in Coximar Bay, between the Boca Nao and Coximar rivers, five miles east of Moro, without the loss of a man. The enemy seemed disposed to dispute the effort, but they

1. "England in the Seven Years' War," p. 260, Vol. II. (*Corbett*).

An Officer on the left of his Division in
Echelon or Diagonal position the Left in Front.



56th REGIMENT of FOOT.
Purple Facings, white lace with a pink stripe.

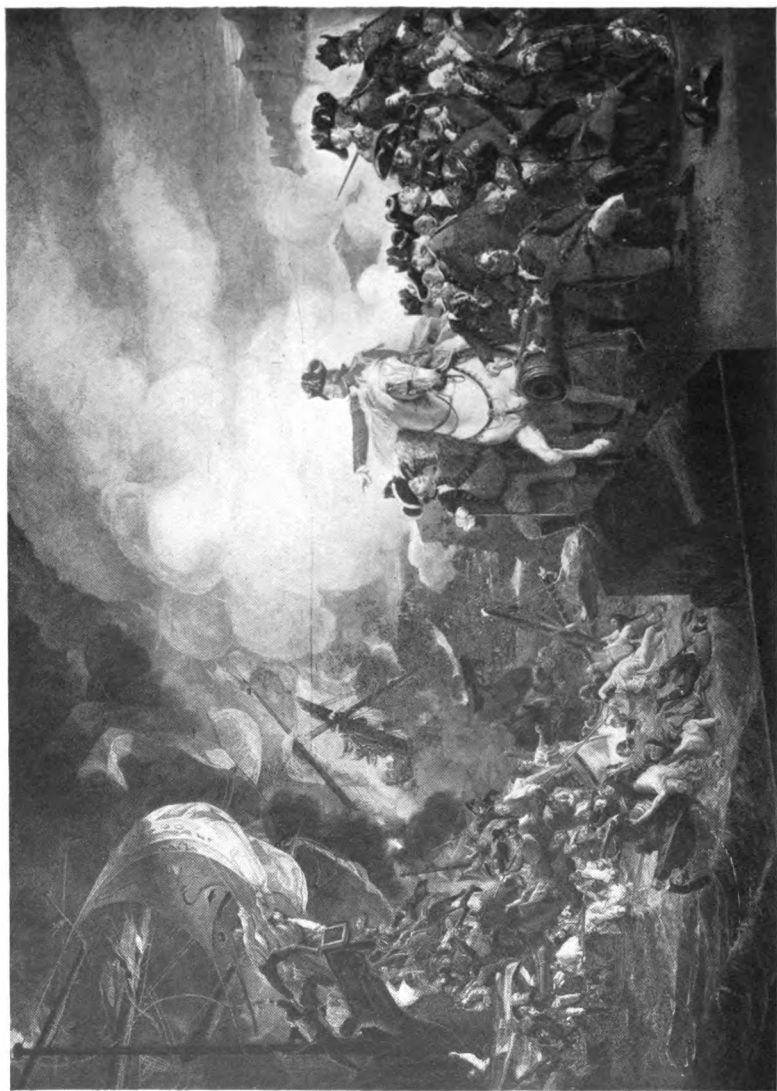
dispersed into the woods when fired upon by the sloops "Mercury" and "Bonella." In this operation the Regiment was covered by the "Orford" (66 guns). Whilst a part of the force, under Major-Gen. the Hon. W. Keppel, who was colonel of the 56th, proceeded to invest Moro Castle, the main defence of the harbour entrance, another contingent, under General Elliott, afterwards known to history as the defender of Gibraltar, cut communication with the interior and covered the entrenchments of the besiegers. Corbett argues with great vigour that instead of the formal methods of investment customary against towns in the Low Countries, Albemarle should have pushed boldly on and captured the city without waiting for the fall of the Castle. The commander preferred less venturesome tactics, though the two months' siege cost a thousand casualties and six times that number of deaths from disease out of an army of fourteen thousand. Moro Castle was commanded by a gallant and determined Spaniard, Don Luis Vicente de Velasco, whose defence made him one of the national heroes of Spain. For nearly two months he harassed the British troops toiling at their siege works in terrible heat and suffering considerably from lack of water. The Castle mounted about seventy guns and had a garrison of 400, with 300 negro labourers, relieved every third day. With resolute spirit Velasco walled up the gate of the castle and thenceforth the only means of communication with the city was by means of hanging ladders slung over the walls. The fire of the defenders was silenced and a sap pushed along the coast until the face of the rock was reached on which the castle stood. A mine was commenced under the bastion and another sunk in the counterscarp of the ditch—which was 70ft. deep—in order to throw the earth into the cavity and form a passage for the stormers. Preparations were made for the assault. On the morning of July 30th the storming party assembled consisting of a captain, five officers and 107 other ranks of the Royals, a major, seven officers and 137 other ranks of the 56th, employed as marksmen,¹ and a lieutenant-colonel, seven officers and 52 other ranks of the 90th, a total of 318. A major, sixteen officers and 164 other ranks of the 35th Regiment were employed in support, there also being a captain and 150 sappers. The column thus comprised 650 of all ranks, led by three detachments, each of an officer and 12 men. The commander was Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart, of the 90th, who had distinguished himself shortly before by beating off a determined Spanish sally. Behind them was the main body, at the head of which was the 1st Brigade, led by Major-General Keppel. Earlier in the morning the Spaniards had sent a party across the harbour in boats and a floating battery, which discharged grape into the ditch where the miners were employed, but without effect except to cause a slight

1. This party is referred to in the despatches as simply marksmen, but the Digest of Service in the regimental records gives it as having been supplied by the 56th.

delay in the work. The covering party fired so well that the enemy were obliged to retire. At the hour of siesta a terrific explosion shook the castle. The mine in the counterscarp was without effect, but that in the bastion brought down a portion of both faces and made a practicable breach. To reach this point the troops had to pass one by one over a narrow ridge of rock. Aided by the fire of the party in the covered way, the assaulting column formed on the top of the broken wall, obtaining what protection they could from the gun carriages and rubbish on the ramparts. The storming party then divided to the right and left as the head of the 1st Brigade mounted the breach. Moving impetuously forward, they were quickly within the castle, of which they took possession with small loss. The surprise was complete. The brave defender, already wounded, received another fatal injury in the breast. Within a fortnight Havana surrendered and Cuba passed to British control. The casualties of the 56th up to that time numbered 209. Lieutenant White and Ensign Ingram died of disease, 36 other ranks were killed, 74 wounded, four missing, 86 died of disease and seven died of wounds. The mortality from disease subsequently very much increased. The Regiment—then commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Alexander Monypenny, Lieut.-Colonel Stewart having died on September 1st—formed part of the garrison, under Major-General the Hon. W. Keppel, for several months, but when the Island was delivered up to Spain again in exchange for Florida in July, 1763, the Pompadours sailed for Ireland in the “Good Intent,” only 200 strong. These men were mostly drafts from other regiments in England. Garrison duty at Limerick ensued. The Regiment removed to Dublin in 1765 and whilst there authority was given to recruit able-bodied Protestants by beat of drum. Then a short term at Waterford in 1767-8 was followed by another two years at Dublin, when orders were received for foreign service.

SIEGE OF GIBRALTAR.

One of the best remembered episodes in our military history is the stubborn defence of Gibraltar by General Eliott (Lord Heathfield) and a British garrison from 1779 to 1783, when the nation was waging its losing struggle with the American colonists and France and Spain were leagued against it, too. The Essex have the right to bear “Gibraltar” on their regimental colours, with the Castle and Key and the motto, *Montis Insignia Calpe*, for, as the 56th, they served right through the blockade and thus share in the glory of a great exploit. The Castle and Key as a badge are of ancient date, having been first assumed by Henry of Castile at the time when he captured the Rock from the Moors. In May, 1770, the Regiment marched to Cork from Dublin and embarked for Gibraltar. Special efforts had been made to recruit, for a light infantry company was authorized. The 56th were on the Rock for twelve years, during which time three commanding officers were gazetted. Lieut.-Colonel



Engraving by William Sharp of J. S. Copley's well-known picture of the Siege of Gibraltar.

♦ Lt.-Col. Hardy.
 (without Regt.)
 ♦ Lt.-Col. Crake.
 (66th Regt.)
 ♦ Capt. Vallotton.
 (Hussars).
 (60th Regt.)

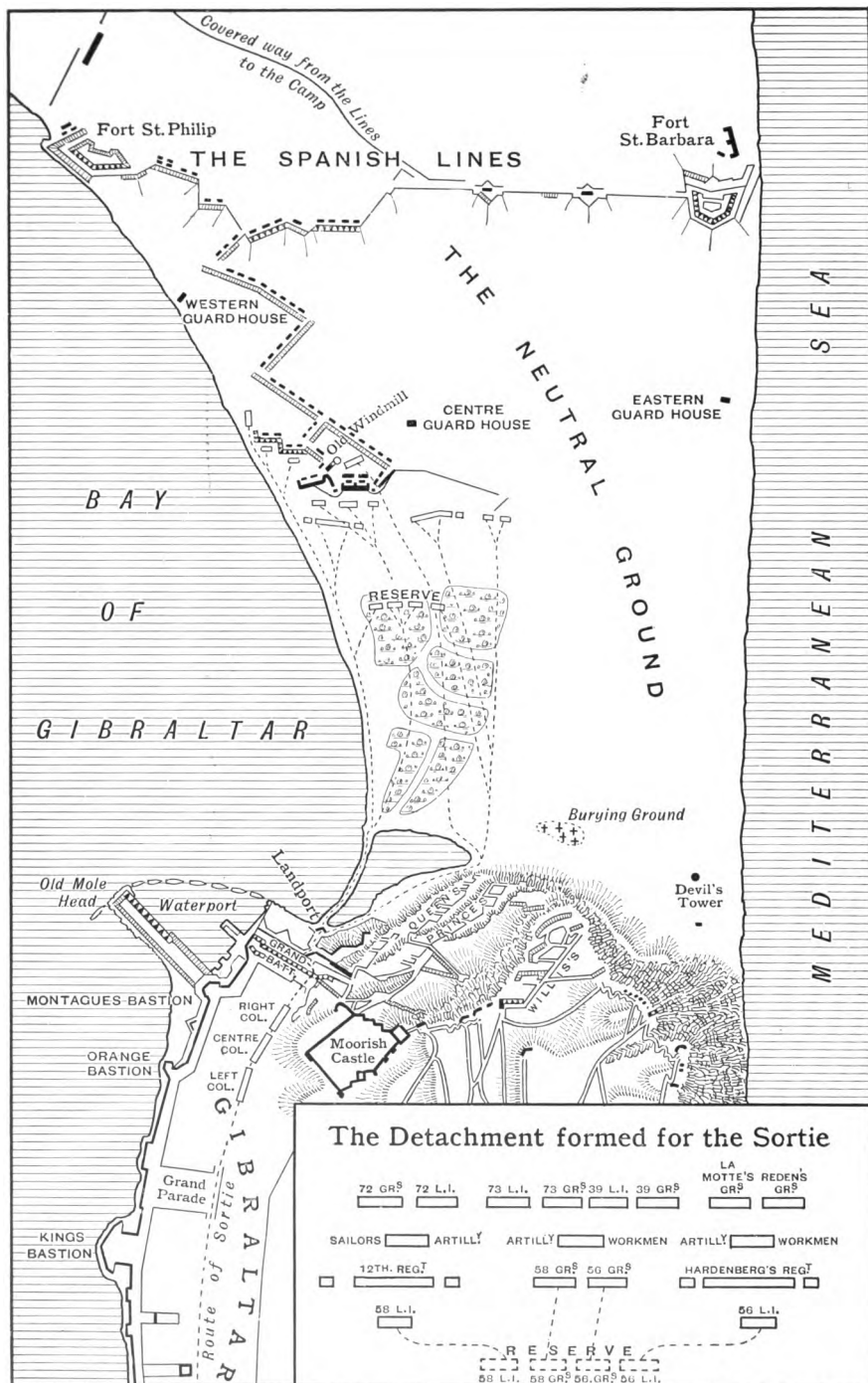
John Caulfield succeeded Monypenny in 1776, then for a few weeks, in 1778, Lieut.-Colonel Henry Johnson, followed by Lieut.-Colonel Peter Craig (January, 1779). The 56th were part of the garrison when in June, 1779, there was an interruption of peaceful intercourse with the Spanish authorities and a strong Spanish army (under the Duke of Crillon), acting with the Spanish navy, first sought to reduce the fortress by blockade and then by persistent bombardment. General Eliott was a tough old soldier whose training, fortunately enough, fitted him specially for the form of service which he was to undertake. Entering the army as an ensign in the 23rd Fusiliers, he became an engineer in 1737 and an artilleryman in 1739; he was then gazetted a cornet in the Horse Grenadier Guards, being wounded at Dettingen and also present at Fontenoy. In 1759 he raised the 15th Light Dragoons and later served with the Earl of Albemarle in the expedition to Havana, which was the occasion of the first active service of the 56th, and in which they won distinction. Fortescue, in his "History of the Army," also illustrates the natural aptitudes of the man for his great task. "In October, 1779, a man of the 58th was charged before him with saying that, if the Spaniards came into Gibraltar, he would join them. Eliott declared that the man must be mad and directed that his head should be shaven, that he should be blistered, bled, put into a strait waistcoat, committed to the provost-marshal on a diet of bread and water and prayed for in church. So now, when a private of the 71st announced that the fall of Gibraltar upon a certain day had been revealed to him in a dream, Eliott ordered him to be confined by the provost-marshal until the day came and then to be flogged. By such quaint methods the croakers and murmurers of the garrison were silenced." General Eliott was also a most abstemious man, living simply upon vegetables, puddings and water. When the Duke of Crillon forwarded to him, late in the siege, some fruit, vegetables and game, with ice, he accepted the present with reluctance and asked that the favour should not be repeated, adding, characteristically, "Indeed, to be plain with your Excellency, though vegetables at this season are scarce with us, every man has got a quantity proportioned to the labour which he has bestowed in raising them. The English are naturally fond of gardening and cultivation; and here we find our amusement in it, during the intervals of rest from public duty."² The garrison was composed originally of 5,382 officers and men, with Lieut.-General R. Boyd as lieutenant-governor and Major-General de la Motte commanding the Hanoverian Brigade. In addition to artillery and engineers, there were the 12th Regiment (599), 39th (586), 56th (587, Major Bulleine Fancourt in command), 58th (595), 72nd Royal Manchester Volunteers, subsequently

1. P. 421, Vol. III.

2. "The Siege of Gibraltar," p. 269. (*Drinkwater*).

disbanded (1,086), with three Hanoverian regiments (Hardenberg's, Reden's and de la Motte's), with an average strength of 450. The 71st and 79th were landed in January, 1780, and, towards the close of the siege, after the failure of the Spanish main attack, the 25th and 54th were added. The total losses of the garrison were 1,231, of which 333 were due to death in action or by wounds, 138 were discharged because of disablement by wounds, 536 died of sickness, exclusive of the hundred who succumbed to scurvy in 1779 and 1780, 181 were discharged from incurable complaints and 43 were returned as deserters. The loss of the 56th comprised 17 rank and file killed, one sergeant and nine rank and file dead of wounds, one officer and six rank and file disabled by wounds, three officers, two sergeants and 59 rank and file wounded, one officer (Lieut. Clarke), four sergeants, one drummer and 34 rank and file dead of disease and three rank and file deserted, a total of 141. The disabled officer was Surgeon Chesholme, who was wounded by a splinter of shell at the door of a northern casemate in the King's bastion. Chesholme had one foot taken off and the other leg broken, beside a wound in the knee. His companion was scalped.

The state of war came suddenly and British officers living in villages round about Gibraltar or those who were paying visits to the interior were placed in great difficulty. The former had to hurriedly vacate their dwellings, leaving their personal effects behind, whilst the latter were not permitted to return to the garrison direct, but had to leave Cadiz by other routes. One party, Colonel Ross and Captain Vignoles, of the 39th, with Captain Lefanue, of the 56th, in disguise, took passage in a rowing boat from Faro, in Portugal, to Gibraltar, and were lucky enough to rejoin their units, though others were not so fortunate. Among the staff appointments made by the Governor were: Quartermaster-General, Major Hardy; aide-de-camp, Captain Valloton; assistant town major, Lieut. S. Wood, all of the 56th Regiment. Provisions rapidly became scarce and strict regulation of consumption was enforced. Happily, relief came early in 1780, when a British fleet, under Admiral Sir George Rodney, was able to enter the bay and land food supplies, whilst upon its departure soldiers' wives and children not provided with twelve months' provisions (250lb. of flour or 360lb. of biscuit) went with it. Among the food supplies was a cargo of salt cod landed from a Newfoundland ship and which was held responsible for the spread of scurvy, which seriously affected the troops in the early stage of the operations. An intermittent source of supply was oil and fowls from Tetuan, whilst on another occasion a Moorish sloop from Malaga provided the garrison with butter, raisins and leather. Admiral Darby and his fleet gave relief in April, 1781, by which time the enemy were actively employed on the land side as well as by sea; their shells set light to shops



The Sortie from Gibraltar, November 27th, 1781.

Emery Walker Ltd. sc.

in the town and there was some rioting caused by soldiers consuming concealed stores of drink which were thus exposed. Stern measures were taken to restore discipline. At this time the 56th Regiment, with the 12th and 39th, were stationed at Montague's Casemate, the Galley House and gateway of the Water Port; in July of the same year the 56th occupied the South Barracks. On November 27th, 1781, General Eliott decided upon an attempt to destroy the enemy's batteries, work upon which he could not stop by artillery fire. A force of 2,200 men, under Brigadier-General Ross, was disposed in three columns. The grenadier company of the 56th (68) served with the centre column and the light company (68) with the right column. They had to carry 36 rounds or more of ammunition, with a good flint in each piece and another in each man's pocket. The advance began across the six furlongs of intervening space just before 8 a.m., as the light of the moon was declining. The right column was perceived and fired upon, but pressed forward and seized the works, as did the other columns, among the points taken being St. Carlos's battery, newly constructed. "The ardour of the assailants was irresistible. The enemy on every side gave way, abandoning in an instant and with the utmost precipitation those works which had cost them so much expense and employed so many months to perfect."¹ The 12th and Hardenberg's regiments were formed up within the works as a support whilst the workmen and artillerymen made preparations to destroy the emplacements, ten 18in. mortars and eighteen 26-pounders. "The batteries were soon in a state for the fire faggots to operate, and the flames spread with astonishing rapidity into every part. The column of fire and smoke which rolled from the works beautifully illuminated the troops and neighbouring objects, forming altogether a *coup d'œil* not possible to be described."² Trains were quickly laid to the magazines and as the rearguard entered once again within the garrison, the principal powder store blew up with a tremendous report. The columns only lost four privates killed, one missing and 25 wounded, and none of these belonged to the 56th. General Eliott issued an order congratulating the troops upon their brilliant exploit—"The bearing and conduct of the whole detachment—officers, seamen and soldiers—on this glorious occasion surpass my utmost acknowledgments." The enemy reconstructed their works and conducted the investment with renewed vigour and the defenders were busily employed in strengthening their lines to meet the threatened attack in force—"every sergeant, drummer, musician, officer's servant and private soldier was required to use the musket, shovel and pickaxe as his services were necessary."³ Between the 10th June and the end of the month the enemy, encouraged by the capture of

1, 2 and 3. "The Siege of Gibraltar," (*Drinkwater*).

Minorca, pounded the Rock with 75,000 shot and 25,000 shells, but with little effect. The crisis came in September, 1782, when ten floating batteries were constructed to batter the obstinate garrison into submission. They were the design of a Frenchman, named d'Arçon. "These batteries had been constructed by dismantling large vessels and fitting the side of them which was exposed to fire with a sloping roof, composed of three layers of squared timber, three feet thick, separated by wet sand and backed by a bed of wet cork. These roofs were further covered with wet hides and provided with central reservoirs of water, from which ran a network of pipes to every exposed part of the vessel's side. The armament of these floating batteries varied according to their size from ten to twenty-six guns, which were mounted on one side only, with crews of from two hundred and fifty to eight hundred men."¹ In addition, there were 47 sail of the line, comprising the Franco-Spanish fleet, carrying 212 guns. With the artillery served by the army on land, 328 pieces of heavy ordnance were in action. The attack was delivered on September 13th. For a time the British fire in reply had no effect; then red hot shot were used, but still without apparent success. "As the ordnance portable furnaces for heating shot were not sufficient in number to supply the demands of the artillery when the attack was at its height, large fires were kindled of wood in the corners of the nearest buildings, and shot, being thrown into these piles, were soon heated red-hot. These supplies were jocularly termed by the men 'roasted potatoes.'"² The fire continued throughout the day and far into the night. By one o'clock the next morning the flagship of the floating batteries was in flames and ere daylight the others were blazing—"a scene of mingled sublimity and terror." The enemy's loss was estimated at 2,000 men, but the casualties to the garrison were exceedingly small, totalling 16 killed and 68 wounded. The 56th had two men killed and two wounded. Captain Valloton, of the 56th, was sent with the Governor's despatches announcing the repulse of the great attack when Lord Howe's fleet, which had effected much needed relief, sailed for home waters. There was hard fighting between vessels of the opposing navies, but the war had run its course. On February 6th, 1783, peace was declared and the long trial of General Eliott and the garrison ended. The Spanish commander, the Duke of Crillon, later paid a ceremonial visit to the Governor and on April 23rd (St. George's Day) the troops assembled on Red Sands to hear General Eliott's message from the Houses of Parliament and to receive his own congratulations, after which a procession was formed, headed by the band of the 12th Regiment playing "See the conquering hero comes." The band of the 56th Regiment

1. "History of the Army," p. 421, Vol. III. (*Fortescue*).

2. "The Siege of Gibraltar," p. 297 (note), (*Drinkwater*).

brought up the rear with the grenadiers of the garrison. Then followed the investiture of General Eliott as a Knight Commander of the Bath. Upon his return to England in 1787 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Heathfield. Among other promotions was that of Major Bulleine Fancourt, of the 56th, to lieutenant-colonel.

A curious point arose in 1842 concerning the position of the key in the badge of the Castle and Key which had been granted in recognition of the siege and to elucidate it the opinion of Lancaster Herald and Inspector of Regimental Colours was obtained. He held that the key should be placed in the entrance door or porch. In the drawings of colours of the 12th, 89th and 58th Regiments, approved by King William IV in November, 1836, the key was in the latter position and in the sketch furnished for the new colours of the 56th Regiment in 1837 this rule was adhered to and if the key was placed below the castle, the Lancaster Herald declared it must have been altered by the person who made the colours. In an earlier sketch submitted by the Regiment the key was placed below the Castle, but it was then amended and shown within the porch. The alteration was made, for Cannon's book (1842) shows the colours with the key within the porch, but the present colours of the Pompadours, handed to their custody in 1864, as will be seen in the frontispiece, again place the key below the porch. An interesting correspondence had taken place earlier (1827) between Colonel Barclay, then commanding the 56th, and the Adjutant General. The Commander-in-Chief had disallowed the request that India and Bourbon should be inscribed upon the colours on the ground "of the remoteness of the services of the Regiment in those stations." Colonel Barclay then replied by asking that the honorary badges which it had been accustomed to wear on its colours and appointments might be confirmed, as the authorities therefor had not been recorded. The reference was to "Moro" and "Gibraltar," the latter with the Castle and Key and the words *Montis Insignia Calpe*, the insignia and motto of the fortress. Under date December 27th, 1827, the Commander-in-Chief approved the request, adding: "He has no hesitation in thus confirming an official authority which His Grace concludes the Regiment must have had (although the authority cannot now be traced) when it first obtained the distinctions above specified." In April, 1784, the Adjutant General had written to the commanding officer of the 56th signifying his Majesty's approval of the word "Gibraltar" being placed upon the grenadier and light infantry caps, the accoutrements and drums and "upon the second colour of the regiment underneath the number of it."

DESIGNATED THE WEST ESSEX.

It was whilst at Gibraltar that the 56th received the title of the West Essex, the outcome of a scheme whereby it was hoped to stimulate recruiting by giving certain of the regiments a county

connection. Very little was done with it at the time, however, though, as the Regiment often went to Chatham on return from foreign service to recruit, many Essex men must have been attracted to the ranks. The circular letter, dated August 31st, 1782—whereby the change was ordered to be put into effect—indicated that the territorial title was an alternative to the number by which the Regiment was usually known and which, coming first, continued to be used in military circles for long years thereafter; indeed, until the introduction of the short service system in 1881. The instructions were that the King desired that the regiments so allotted should endeavour by all means in their power to cultivate and improve the connection so as to create a mutual attachment between the county and the regiment which might at all times be useful towards recruiting. The letter added: "As the completing of the several regiments now generally so deficient is in the present crisis of the most important national concern, you will on this occasion use the utmost possible exertion for that purpose by prescribing the greatest diligence to your officers and recruiting parties, and by every possible attention to the gentlemen and considerable inhabitants, and as nothing can so much tend to conciliate their affections as an orderly and polite behaviour towards them and an observance of the strictest discipline in all your quarters, you will give the most positive orders on that head." It was not until the short service system was introduced and the depot was definitely located in Essex, that either the East Essex (44th) or the West Essex were mainly recruited from men of the county.

LIFE ON A TRANSPORT.

In December, 1783, after twelve years at "The Rock," the Regiment embarked for home and the regulations for securing health and good order on the voyage included: "The commanding officer is to take care that every morning all the men be brought upon deck, the berths cleaned and the bedding brought up to the air, if the weather permits. That no smoking be suffered between decks. That no gaming be allowed, nor shall any person be suffered to vend or distribute drugs or spirituous liquors. That as many men as possible be kept on deck in the day time. If any of the vessels should put into any port or harbour, no officer or soldier is to go on shore but by the consent of the officer commanding of the troops on board such vessel, and when any soldiers are allowed to go on shore a non-commissioned officer is to go with them, who is to be answerable for their conduct when on shore." The men landed at Portsmouth and marched to Chatham, where the Regiment was ordered to be reduced to a peace establishment of 26 officers and 445 other ranks, six officers being seconded. The numbers on the establishment, however, were constantly altered to meet service exigencies. The 56th left for St. Albans and then in the Spring of 1784 for Glasgow and Aberdeen.

A BURIAL AT GLASGOW.

In the years 1785-6-7 the West Essex were successively at Fort George, Perth, Edinburgh Castle, Ayr and Glasgow, where they were reduced from eleven to ten companies. Whilst the Regiment was at Glasgow Captain Addison, of the grenadier company, died (January, 1788) and was buried at Laich Kirk. A graphic description is given in a private letter of the military ceremony at the funeral: "First went the next officer of grenadiers, with his cap all dressed in white, which had a beautiful contrast with the black turban; he carried his musket with the mouth of it towards the ground below his arm. He had a fine white scarf hung over his shoulders and tied with black crepe. Next the grenadier company, ten men abreast, and there were just four tens at about six yards distance from one another. These carried their muskets all in the same way as the officer. Then came an officer of light infantry dressed in the same way as the former. He was followed by the band of music, with their instruments hung with crepe and playing mournfully. Then two drums covered with black, now and then giving a most dismal sound. Next came the English clergyman with his clerk, both having in their hands the book, open. They had on black gowns, with white scarves. Then came the corpse, carried on the heads of some of the soldiers, with four of the friends of the deceased as pall-bearers, with white scarves. The sword and bayonet of the officer tied across the corpse with white ribbons. The whole officers of the regiment were next in order and then the rest of the regiment, without arms. They proceeded from the head of the Stockwell through the Irongate and High Street up to the High Church, within which he was interred. I saw the procession from my window, then went into the churchyard. None were allowed to get within the Church but the officers. The grenadier company drew up and fired three rounds after the corpse was into the Church."

There came a change of scene in January, 1788, for the 56th sailed from Glasgow for Belfast, *en route* for Galway, where they spent a year. Dublin was the next station, Lieut.-Colonel Peter Craig in command. There was much unrest in Ireland, caused by sympathy for the French Revolution, and although the rebellion did not break out until 1798, the situation was critical for some years previously. In 1792 the 56th were hurriedly despatched to Drogheda and whilst there were augmented by two companies. In 1793 they were at Dundalk and whilst serving with his company at Wexford, Brevet Major Valloton was killed by rioters. His men were drawn up and the officer advanced to the front to reason with the crowd. Whilst so doing he was cut down by a man armed with a scythe; the men fired in return and killed and wounded several. A monument to Major Valloton was

1. "Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research," No. 18, Vol. 4.

subsequently erected upon the spot. The good conduct of the Regiment on that occasion was specially noted by the Lord Lieutenant.

IN THE WEST INDIES.

Active service came upon the outbreak of war with the French Republic. In August, 1793, the Regiment marched to Cork in readiness for foreign service, and it sailed in November for Barbados to join Sir Charles (later Earl) Grey's expedition against French West Indies, then in a state of confusion on account of the change of government. Sir John Jervis (later Earl St. Vincent) was the co-operating Admiral. The voyage was long and unhealthy. The Regiment landed in January, 1794, but February had appeared before the army embarked for Martinique. The 56th served with the 63rd and 64th in the second brigade, under Brigadier-General Thomas Dundas. The latter was so well esteemed that whilst at Barbados the officers of the light companies were ordered to attend a course of instruction under him in order to restore "the perfection of light infantry attained during the American War," and Fortescue sagely adds, "Thus was begun at Barbados the work which Moore ten years later had to perfect at Shorncliffe." One of the brigades was composed of three battalions formed from light infantry companies and the light company of the 56th served with the 3rd battalion. A brigade organized from grenadier companies also contained two companies of the 56th, one with the 1st battalion and the other with the 3rd battalion. Landing was effected upon Martinique at three points on February 5th—Dundas at the Bay of Galion on the east coast of the island; Sir Charles Gordon at Case de Navire to the north of Fort Royal Bay, on the west coast, and Grey at Trois Rivières in the Bay of Marin. The three efforts were most successful. The system of defence had been falsely conceived, "for the entire coast, to say nothing of the country inland, was studded with an incredible number of batteries, isolated and without unity for any scheme of general resistance."¹ Galion Bay, where the 56th and others were to operate with Dundas, contained Trinité Harbour, which was defended by two small forts. The battery at the entrance to the bay was silenced by the guns of the fleet and the men were landed on the neck of the peninsula and after a night's rest were sent against the town of Trinité, defended by a force of mulattoes. Some resistance was encountered from snipers in sugar-cane fields, but this was overcome with the bayonet and, advancing upon Trinité from the rear, the defences were quickly captured, whilst the forts were seized without the firing of a shot. On February 7th Gros Morne, a lofty mountain, was taken and communication cut between the north and south of Martinique. Following up his

1. "History of the Army," p. 533, Vol. IV. (pt. 1.) (*Fortescue*)

success, Dundas occupied Morne Bruneau, three miles north of Fort Royal. The enemy fiercely counter-attacked, but were repulsed and by February 14th Grey had joined Dundas at Bruneau. By an extraordinary march across the mountains, nearby Mont Pelée—in which, however, the 56th did not take part—followed by stiff fighting, Dundas effected a junction with another column which had been ordered to move by another route. Three columns then fell upon St. Pierre and occupied it, but the fighting was not at an end. Bellegarde, the mulatto leader, made a determined resistance until captured at Sourier. Ere March was out Forts Louis and Bourbon had been secured after effective co-operation between the army and navy, the first-named stronghold being taken by Captain Faulkner, of the “Zebra,” who grounded his ship, as leader of a flotilla of small boats, under the walls and then carried the place by escalade. There was unusually heavy rain and Fortescue tells us the troops would have suffered much had not Grey taken the precaution, before leaving England, to obtain flannel shirts for them. On March 23rd Martinique formally passed into British occupation, the total casualties not exceeding 850 and the troops receiving the highest praise from their commander. Among the marks of royal approbation was exemption from the payment of postage for their letters.

The 56th were left as part of the garrison of Martinique, but the flank companies were employed in the seizure of St. Lucia, —the grenadiers in the brigade commanded by Prince Edward (afterwards Duke of Kent) and the light company with that of Major-General Dundas. Guadeloupe was also occupied after some fighting, but then the tide of success slowly turned. Suffering considerably from yellow fever and without adequate reinforcement, the British force had to face a fierce French effort in Guadeloupe, which resulted in the evacuation of that Island in December, 1794. One gallant episode of the fighting which preceded this movement has an abiding interest for the 56th. The camp of Berville, near to the isthmus which connects Grande Terre with Guadeloupe, commanded by Graham, was garrisoned by 250 regular troops and 300 royalists, all sickly. These were all that remained of the first battalions of grenadiers and of light infantry, the 39th, 43rd and 65th, and three companies of the 56th. They were attacked with vigour on September 30th, but after three hours’ fighting remained unbeaten. “What passed on the following day,” says Fortescue,¹ “is extremely uncertain, for Graham, being wounded, was unable to see, and no one else appears to have survived to tell. There is reason, however, to believe that between the 29th September and 6th October the French assaulted the camp several times, and that they acknowledged their force to have numbered 3,000 and their

1. “History of the Army,” p. 381, Vol. IV. (*Fortescue*).

casualties to have been 900. But after a week of such work the gallant little garrison could do no more. Two officers and 25 men had been killed, five officers and 51 men wounded and on the 6th October Graham, finding himself hopelessly cut off from all help, his provisions reduced to two days' supply and his men hardly able to stand, surrendered on condition that the British troops should be marched out with the honours of war and be shipped by first opportunity to Great Britain. Thereupon, 125 ghastly figures staggered out of the lines, 'fitter for hospital than to be under arms'—all that remained of what had once been three battalions and 28 companies of infantry and two companies of artillery. For a whole year, despite the capitulation, they were detained as prisoners, but they died so rapidly in the weeks that followed the surrender that probably few of them saw England again. Yet though the tale of their noble service must remain for ever but half told, the records of the British Army contain no grander example of heroism than this of the dying garrison of the Camp of Berville." Men of the 56th were also in the final episode at Guadeloupe, viz., Colonel Prescott's defence of the fort at the southern end of Basseterre town, known to the British troops as Fort Matilda. With the skilful aid of the fleet, Prescott held the fort from October 14th to December 10th, 1794, and then, his guns being dismounted and his walls in ruins, he embarked his garrison of 600 men for Martinique. The West Essex returned eight men wounded during the siege. Captain Beckwith, of the 56th, was aide-de-camp to the commander. During this year five companies of the 56th were at Grenada and, whilst in garrison, the personnel of 230 was reduced by disease to 45 men.

IN ST. DOMINGO.

It is no wonder, therefore, that after being quartered at Grenada and Martinique, the 56th were so reduced in personnel that the bulk of the men fit for duty were, in October, 1794, transferred to the 6th, 9th and 15th Regiments and the remainder were sent to England. Gravesend was reached on February 18th, 1795, and the remnant took up abode at Chatham, where active recruiting measures were adopted. In September the Regiment sailed from Gravesend for Cork, with an establishment which permitted a strength of over 1,100, in addition to two recruiting companies. It was not long at Spike Island, for early in 1796 it was ordered to Barbados, with five other regiments, the intention being to reinforce the British troops in occupation of part of St. Domingo. The 56th reached this fever-stricken island in the first week in May and in June were part of the force, under Major-General Whyte, which captured Bombarde to provide for the better security of Mole St. Nicholas. There was little fighting, the garrison of three hundred white men surrendering upon condition that they were allowed to withdraw.

Bombarde was only held a month, for it was soon surrounded by irregulars, and the preservation of communication being difficult, the garrison was evacuated to the Mole. Yellow fever raged with devastating effect and reinforcements were scarce, for a strong expedition, under General Abercromby, was engaged in the reduction of other of the West Indian Islands, which had been opened to attack by the declaration of war by Spain. Operations were consequently of a defensive nature and restricted in scope. The 56th spent part of 1797 in the district of Grand Anse and took part in an attack on Port Jack Thomas, the defence of Irois and an operation against St. Mary's. Little headway was made, however, and an agreement concluded by Colonel Thomas Maitland with Toussaint l'Ouverture, the celebrated mulatto leader, led to evacuation of the British positions in St. Domingo late in 1798. Fortescue estimates that the six years' warfare in the West Indies then closed cost the Army and Navy nearly one hundred thousand men, one half of whom were dead and the remainder permanently unfitted for service.

During this period of service abroad the West Essex were commanded for a short time by Lieut.-Colonel Earle Bulwer, who was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel John Whitwell (November, 1795). He died in 1796 and was followed by Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Picton in May of that year. Colonel Picton's association with the Regiment could not have been other than nominal, for almost immediately afterwards he was appointed Governor of Trinidad, yet the fact that General Sir Thomas Picton, one of the best-known and most heroic leaders of the British Army, was borne upon the strength of the 56th is a fact of which it may well be proud. Harassed by litigation which ensued as a result of his governorship, the allegation being that he allowed torture to be applied according to Spanish law, he yet triumphed over his accusers, and then, after commanding a brigade in the Walcheren expedition and serving as governor of Flushing, he joined Wellington in the Peninsular War, commanding the 3rd, or Fighting, Division with signal distinction. When Napoleon escaped from Elba and hurried to meet Wellington in Belgium, Picton commanded the 5th Division, which, almost alone, resisted Ney's attack for three hours at Quatre Bras. Picton was wounded, but concealed his injury lest he should be prevented from taking part in the battle of Waterloo. In this contest he fell gloriously at the head of the division, when giving the order for the charge which repulsed the French onset in that quarter.

The 56th, a remnant in strength, arrived at Gravesend on January 31st, 1799, and after a stay at Chatham it was moved to Canterbury, where, among the recruits who joined it, was a volunteer from the Northumberland Militia, named William Surtees. He served a couple of years in the 56th prior to joining the Rifle Brigade, in which he subsequently rose to the position

of quartermaster. Surtees' "Twenty-Five Years in the Rifle Brigade" is a graphic description of the life of a private and non-commissioned officer and is especially interesting to members of the West Essex Regiment. The opening chapters are devoted to his memories of service in the 56th in 1799 and 1800. The son of a tradesman in Corbridge, Northumberland, Surtees enlisted in the Northumberland Militia at the age of 17. He took a month to march from his native county to Chelmsford to join his Militia regiment, from which he volunteered into the 56th Regiment, which he refers to "as a skeleton, just then returned from the West Indies, where twice during the war it had been nearly exterminated by disease." He says that the life of a soldier was not considered creditable in his native village and when he sometimes exhibited symptoms of a military inclination he was often taunted with the then opprobrious expression "Ay, thou likes the smell of poother," meaning thereby, says Surtees, "that I was likely to disgrace myself by going for a soldier." He was posted to the light company upon joining. The 56th were among the regiments into which Militia volunteers were ordered to be enlisted, the headquarters of the unit then being given as Gloucester. In the year 1799 they received no fewer than 774 men by this means.

FIGHTING IN HOLLAND.

Holland was then occupied by French troops and an enterprise in that country was jointly undertaken by the British and Russian Governments in the vain hope that Prussia, which was the country most interested in the question, might be induced to vigorously support the Coalition. The British authorities were to find 30,000 men, recruited mainly from Militia volunteers, and the Russians 12,000, the whole commanded by the Duke of York. The 56th were not with the division under Abercromby which secured the landing near Groete Ketten and in the fighting which followed the French effort at expulsion. Minus their light and grenadier companies, which had been formed with other similar companies into separate battalions, they were part of the 9th Brigade (1/9th, 2/9th and 56th), under Major-General Manners, which embarked at Deal and landed with the main body of the army in time for the attack upon Bergen on September 19th, 1799. The desire was to force the French line, which ran from a point three miles north-east of Alkmaar north-westward for six miles to Oudkarspel. The attack upon the main position was made by three columns. A detached column, under Abercromby, was detailed for a wide detour through Hoorn and Purmerend, so as to take the enemy's right in flank and rear, but this movement was not completed. The right column was mainly composed of Russian troops and the 56th were with the 9th Brigade in reserve near Petten. The attack by the Russians along the Slaeper dyke towards Bergen broke

down after a confused though gallant advance. The rout was complete and when, says Fortescue, "Manners's brigade reached Schoorl it found the village already abandoned by the Russians and set on fire by their plunderers, and was soon fully occupied, if not overtasked, with the duty of checking the counter-attack of the French. Great efforts were made to rally the Russians, but without success. The danger that the French might force the western extremity of the Allied line became pressing. Meanwhile, the bridge over the great canal at Schoorldam had been broken down, and Dundas (in command of the centre column) was unable to send a man to Schoorl until it had been repaired, which took a full hour. Battalion after battalion was then withdrawn from his force to reinforce Manners, while Dundas himself maintained his position at Schoorldam under a very heavy fire with indomitable tenacity, but it was too late. The British were forced back from Schoorl, and Dundas thereupon retired in good order, covered by the gunboats in the great canal. This seems to have taken place between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, by which time the British had been on foot for thirteen or fourteen hours; and the retreat, as was natural with weary, half-trained and incoherent bodies of men, was anything but well conducted." Some success was achieved in other parts of the field, including the capture of Oudkarspel, but by the close of the day the army was back again upon its original line. The 56th, in this heavy but futile fight, lost 30 rank and file killed, three officers and 33 rank and file wounded and 59 missing, a total of 125. A second attempt upon the enemy's position between Bergen and Egmont-op-Zee was made on October 2nd, the chief effort being on the left by a large force, commanded by Abercromby, which had a toilsome march through the sand dunes by the seashore. The 56th were not with the main attack, being posted to the fourth column under Pulteney, which covered the left of the British position by the Zuyder Zee, threatening the enemy's right and ready to take advantage of any favourable opportunity. As a result of hard fighting, in which the fourth column were not employed, the French withdrew and some progress was made, but the adverse weather conditions and difficulties of supply caused the Duke of York to fall back again. The campaign was ended by the signing of an armistice on October 18th, and the British Army was withdrawn after an arduous campaign, in which little success was achieved, though there was much stubborn fighting.¹

1. A newspaper extract, dated 1799, preserved in the Library of the Royal United Service Institution, mentions in respect of the fighting at Wincle that a volunteer of the 56th, named Obrie, volunteered to attack the bridge on the other side of which was a six-pounder. The bridge was captured and the gun turned against the retreating enemy. Obrie then perceived on the side of the wood two pairs of colours, which were being rolled up. With a party of 26 men, he instantly charged and took prisoner the colonel and 200 men, with two pairs of colours. The latter were presented to the Regiment by Obrie on the command of the Duke of York.

TRIAL AND TRIBULATION.

Now for Surtees and his reminiscences of service with the light company. He writes that the campaign not being expected to be of long duration, the remainder of the army embarked in light marching order and, therefore, without half the usual complement of necessaries, the lack of which was severely felt. With his light company, Surtees sailed from Deal and landed at the Helder on September 15th, having been a week on board the transport. The battalion was sent forward immediately as part of the reserve brigade, under Colonel Macdonald, of the 55th, which was composed of the 23rd, 55th and the grenadier and light battalions—"the reserve was not what is generally understood by that term, for it was composed of some of the best troops in the expedition and was generally first called into action." The men must have presented a weird appearance on the march, for Surtees writes: "We had each man been supplied with a blanket while in camp on Barham Downs, but had no proper or uniform mode of carrying them; we had no great coats, but made use of the blanket sometimes as a substitute in the morning when we turned out to proceed on our march. We certainly made a strange appearance. Some had their blankets thrown around them, others had them twisted up like a horse collar, and tied over their shoulders in the manner of a plaid; whilst some had them stuffed into and others tied on to the top of their knapsacks; in short, we appeared like anything but regular troops." The hardships of the night march upon Hoorn, situated on the Zuyder Zee, are graphically described—"We marched, I think, in sections of about eight file, that is, with eight men abreast in the front rank and the like number in the rear rank covering them. Conceive, then, your arriving at an obstacle which the darkness of the night multiplies a hundredfold. Not more than one man will attempt to pass this obstacle at the same time, and he has to grope his way; consequently all the other fifteen men must stand still, or nearly so, till he is over, before they each move on in turn. Multiply this by the 300 sections behind and you will have a halt for the rear of probably an hour or more, standing all this while nearly up to the knees in mire. . . . During this march, I remember, when the road was extremely deep, someone on the right of my section called out that there was an excellent path a little beyond him; one poor fellow moved in that direction, but had not made many steps till souse he went into a deep canal." The weather was very wet and Surtees notes that he saw the water running out at the bottom of the men's trousers as if from a gutter, but this did not stop military activity. In the operations against Bergen mention is made of a case of shell shock, so common in later warfare. A man of the 56th light company, in charging a fieldpiece,

was struck by the wind of the ball, which brought blood from his mouth, nose and ears and from the effects of which he never thoroughly recovered. The troops suffered severely from thirst on the occasion of the attack on Egmont-op-Zee. To add to their misfortunes, they had cast away their blankets in the morning and rain came down in torrents. "I had nothing for it," says Surtees, "but just to put the cock of my musket between my knees, to keep it as dry as possible, and lay myself down as I was. I endeavoured to get as close as I could to one who had a blanket, and lay down with my head at his feet, which he had covered up very comfortably with his blanket. The rain pelted so heavily and so incessantly on my face that I ventured after a while to pull a little corner of this man's blanket just to cover my cheek from the pitiless storm, and in this situation snatched a comfortable nap, but he, awakening in the night, and finding that I had made free with the corner of his blanket, rudely pulled it from off my face and rolled it round his feet again. I was fain to lie still and let it pelt away, and even in this exposed position I got some sleep, so completely were the powers of nature exhausted by fatigue. At length morning arose and showed us to ourselves, and such a group of sweeps we had seldom seen. Our clothing was literally all filth and dirt; our arms the colour of our coats with rust; and our faces as black as if we had come out of a coalpit. In biting off the ends of the cartridges, there are generally a few grains of powder left sticking on the lips and about the mouth; these, accumulated as they must have been by the great quantity of ammunition each of us had fired (Surtees had used nearly 150 rounds the day before) and with the profuse perspiration we were in during the heat of the day, added to the wet which fell upon us during the night, had caused the powder to run all over our faces, so that in the morning we cut the most ludicrous figure imaginable. . . . We soon got our firelocks again in fighting order; that is, they would go off, though the brightness, on which a clean soldier piques himself, was gone past recovery at this time. I now felt rather sore from firing my piece so often; the recoil against my shoulder and breast had blackened them and rendered them rather painful, and the middle finger of my right hand was completely blackened and swollen from the same cause." The unsteady conduct of certain corps in the retrograde movement which followed caused Surtees to observe that he would never be inclined to put very much confidence in raw troops of whatever nation, or of whatever stuff they might be composed, "for it is certain that without being at all deficient in point of courage, they have not that confidence in their own powers which soldiers who are inured to service possess." When the Battalion was at Basingohorn news came of the armistice which ended the campaign; it was first conveyed to Surtees—who was one of the advanced

sentries, "musing of many things, of home with all its comforts"—by the sudden beating of drums and the sounding of trumpets from the French lines. The people of England were not unmindful of the troops in those days, for presents of flannel shirts and shoes were received whilst the army was waiting to embark. The light company—reduced from 100 strong to 18 (principally by disease)—rejoined the 56th and the whole regiment was embarked upon the "Romney" (50 guns), commanded by Captain Lawford (afterwards Sir Home Popham)—"She was crowded beyond measure, for many, nay, most of the troops had not literally lying room, each company having barely the space between two guns, which, I should think, is not more than twelve feet at the utmost and even here the sailors, whether with or without orders I know not, slung their hammocks over us."

The Regiment landed at Yarmouth on November 17th and marched to Norwich, where the men stayed a few days and found the inhabitants kind and attentive, for they were figures clad in rags and dirt. The 56th left for Chelmsford and *en route* passed through Bury St. Edmunds, where Surtees' old regiment, the Northumberland Militia, were then stationed. After a short stay in the Essex county town, as part of the 8th Brigade, under Major-General Moore, orders came for Horsham, which was reached by way of Whitechapel and London Bridge. In February, 1800, the 56th (Lieut.-Colonel P. K. Skinner) embarked for Ireland on two frigates, one of them the "Endymion," the captain of which had a friendly wager of fifty guineas as to who should be the first to reach Cork. Although Surtees' vessel, the "Endymion," at one time was sailed at the rate of fifteen knots an hour, she was driven out of her course and was obliged to enter the harbour of Kinsale, thus losing the prize. In succession the Regiment was at Cork, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Fermoy and Kinsale until the Peace of Amiens in 1801, when Surtees took his discharge from the 56th, then at Lap's Island, Cork, unluckily for the Regiment, for we should have known much more of its trials and triumphs of that period had he remained with it. He joined the Rifle Brigade, in which he served for many years, rising to the position of Quartermaster and retiring on pension in 1826.

AN IRISH FAMINE.

Before we leave Surtees, however, an extract or two from his recollection of the last years of his service with the 56th in Ireland will be read with interest, for they were the days when the failure of the harvest in 1799 caused hundreds of Irish people to perish from starvation in the following Spring. He says: "We had then what was termed a 'black shilling a day,' that is, twelve pence Irish, an English or white shilling, or Hog, going in that country for thirteen pence; we had not then any beer money, either, but had solely this black shilling to subsist on. Meat at this

THE HIGHEST BOUNTY IN
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OR,
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GUINEAS.



56th Regt.

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And he hopes for a continuance of that partiality which he has
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An Old Recruiting Poster.

[Now Preserved at the Depot, Warley.]

time was no less than 10d. per lb., of which each man received half a pound; bread was 5d. per lb., of which we also got half a pound. This half-pound of bread and half-pound of meat, and that not of the best, was all one had to live on, and do our duty, which was not always of the easiest description. The remainder of our shilling was taken for necessaries, washing, pipeclay, etc., for I do not remember that we ever laid in any sort of vegetable for the pot. Potatoes were out of the question, for they were no less than three shillings a stone of fourteen pounds. Although we did not absolutely suffer from want, the reader will perceive that we were but sparsely dieted; the consequence was innumerable robberies of potato fields and gardens, etc., in the neighbourhood of our quarters; and many were the men that got punished for this crime, but it could not be put a stop to, for hunger is not easily borne. Indeed, on one occasion, I, myself, was seduced, by the persuasion of my comrades and by the cravings of hunger, into the commission of this crime. I remember well I was in what was termed the commissariat guard, a short distance from the town of Fermoy, when my companions, thinking it a favourable opportunity for procuring something to eat, prevailed upon me to accompany them to a garden near the bridge, into which we entered and each of us returned loaded with a fine cabbage, and which afforded us an excellent meal after our relief from guard. The hedges and fields, etc., in the vicinity were ransacked in all directions for the purpose of procuring bramble berries, nettles, etc., in short, for anything that was eatable. Such was our situation during several months while under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Skinner, who, although an excellent officer, had little idea of disposing of a soldier's pay to the best advantage; but latterly we were commanded by Major Keating, who, making the comfort of the soldiers under his command his continual study and delight, soon adopted a system which secured to us plenty in comparison of our former state. He left off the bread and meat save occasionally, and procured for us plenty of oatmeal and milk, by which means our wasted bodies began shortly after to resume quite another appearance."

Whilst in Fermoy the 56th were inspected by Major-General Sir Charles Ross on October 29th, 1800, who subsequently issued a garrison order, in which he expressed approbation of the steadiness and appearance of the Regiment and the zeal and attention displayed on all occasions. Including many soldiers recruited from the Militia for limited service in Europe, the victory of Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt aroused such enthusiasm that, in common with other regiments, the men volunteered for service in any part of the world. The value of the offer can be appreciated when it is recalled that there was a great aversion to duty in the West Indies and that the 56th

had been twice decimated whilst employed there. The Duke of York, as Commander-in-Chief, returned his thanks for the "spirited and loyal offers," but ere long the Peace of Amiens came and in October, 1802, the Regiment marched to Limerick. During the temporary truce measures were taken to reduce the personnel and to place redundant officers on half pay. The most notable change, however, was the decision, under date July 1st, 1803, whereby the Colonel, Lieut.-Colonel and Major no longer had charge of companies, but that each company was required to have its own effective captain. The rank of captain-lieutenant was also abolished.

REMARKABLE RECRUITING.

Upon the resumption of hostilities with France in 1803, the Regiment was still in Ireland, moving successively to Tuam, Loughrea and Kinsale. Recruiting was brisk and from 1804 to the close of the war in 1815 the 56th had a fine record in this respect. In 1797 General the Hon. Chapple Norton was gazetted Colonel. The third son of Lord Grantley, formerly a Speaker of the House of Commons, he was Member for Guildford and had seen service with the Foot Guards in North America. Upon appointment to the 56th General Chapple Norton took a great interest in the Regiment and used his influence in Surrey, where the family estates were situated, to such effect that many hundreds of men were enlisted from that county. A second battalion, 650 non-commissioned officers and men, was added on Christmas Day, 1804, the nucleus being provided at Farnham by the embodiment of four hundred men recruited in Surrey for limited service, but who subsequently volunteered for duty abroad. Lieut.-Colonel H. S. Keating was in command. Then in November, 1813, a third battalion was raised at Horsham, of 650 non-commissioned officers and men, being ready for foreign service within one month from the date of the order for its formation. The most striking feature, however, was the success achieved in maintaining the personnel of the battalions when formed. In January, 1805, the first battalion left Kinsale for the Isle of Wight, where it was augmented to one thousand, rank and file. In the April following it sailed for Bombay, where it was stationed some time. When quartered at the Eastern city the effectives were again raised to 1,306 non-commissioned officers and men. Meanwhile, the second Battalion, which had left Farnham for the Isle of Wight, and was presented with colours there in November 28th, 1805, was increased to 866 non-commissioned officers and men and in the March following to one thousand. Ordered to India in June, 1807, it served with the first battalion in Bombay during 1808, and was at Barachia in 1810, when the personnel was also augmented to 1,306 non-commissioned officers and men. This made the total of the two battalions in India 2,612 rank and

file, many of them volunteers from the Militia, and, remarks Cannon, notwithstanding the casualties of war and climate, the effectives approximated the establishment—a remarkable achievement. The third battalion served in the campaign in Holland in 1814 and was disbanded on October 24th of that year, the fit men being transferred to the battalions serving in India, 800 of whom went to the first battalion. The second battalion suffered severely from disease at Domus, losing 829 non-commissioned officers and men in 21 months—from March, 1818, to December, 1814—but when it joined the Poonah subsidiary force in February, 1815, it was still 900 strong. The second battalion was disbanded at Chatham in December, 1817, having left 400 volunteers to serve with the 65th Regiment in India.

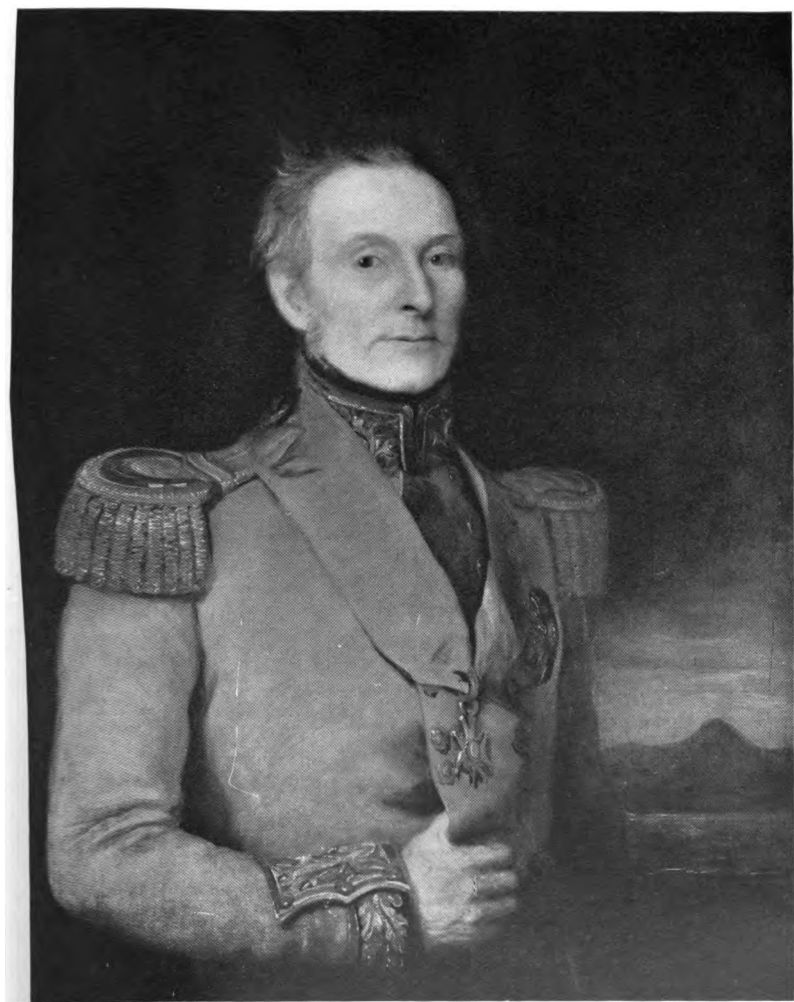
AN ORDER OF MERIT.

Whilst in Bombay in 1812, Lieut.-Colonel Nigel Kingscote arrived from England and took charge of the second battalion. His tenure of the command was notable for the effort which he made to secure the health and sobriety of the men and to inculcate *esprit de corps*. In the standing orders of the Regiment there is record of the institution of an order of merit among the sergeants, which had received the sanction of the Duke of York. The membership was limited to eleven, with the sergeant-major as president. The regulations governing the order were: "Besides the extra pay, members will have the following privileges: They will never be required to do any fatigue duty and when they go on guard it must be with a command of not less than twelve men, and they will never require a pass to be absent from their quarters for two or three hours. No member of the order can ever be tried by court-martial. The order must first be taken from him by the colonel or lieutenant-colonel and whenever any accusation is brought against him should he, on investigation, be honourably acquitted the order will be restored. When a vacancy occurs any officer may recommend a sergeant to the lieutenant-colonel of whom he may have a correct knowledge of his conduct and character. He will be most particular in stating specifically the services, claims, etc., in the recommendations, as, of course, none but men of unexceptionable character or who have distinguished themselves on any particular occasion can have any pretensions to the honourable order. All medals will be worn on the left breast, suspended by a Pompadour riband, about four inches long, and in the Book of Merit will be detailed the circumstances of the soldier's conduct which may have entitled him to the order, signed by the officer who commanded him on the occasion in the field."

KEATING OF THE 56th.

HOW HE LANDED UPON THE ISLAND OF RODRIGUEZ.

During the last years of the Napoleonic War the active service of the first battalion in India was considerable, though, of course, subsidiary to the great military events in Europe. It was employed in wresting from France the last remains of its once great possessions in the East. The numbers of troops employed therein and the wide area covered by the operations are testimony of the wonderful and worldwide naval and military effort put forth by the United Kingdom from 1804 to 1815. Whilst at Bombay a party of 200 men was detached from the first battalion and formed part of the small force with which Lieut.-Colonel H. S. Keating, of the 2/56th, seized the Island of Rodriguez in order to establish a naval depot for the supply of ships employed in the blockade of Mauritius and Bourbon with provisions, vegetables and water. The details of the expedition were carefully worked out, for the Island had been occupied by Britain twice before, so that the dangers to be guarded against were well-known. As early as May, 1809, the administration of the Bombay Presidency informed the Governor-General that the occupation of Rodriguez was in mind and by June 2nd the composition of the force had been decided upon, viz., 200 Europeans (from the 56th), 200 native infantry, 25 artillerymen, with their proportion of Lascars, ten 12-pounder guns in field carriages and two field pieces, with a double proportion of ammunition. Cattle and seeds were also carried in order that the fleet operating in the India Ocean, as well as the garrison, might have fresh meat and vegetables. The force was to be sufficiently strong to repulse a French effort at recapture and to safeguard the Island if the naval squadron lying off it were driven away by stress of weather. On the morning of June 28th the five transports left Bombay, convoyed by H.M.S. "Belliqueux" (Commodore Byng) and E.I. Company's sloop, "Wasp." The weather was squally, with rain, contrary winds and a heavy swell from the westward, which so delayed progress that the little fleet did not cross the line until July 16th and did not reach Rodriguez until August 4th. The next day a landing was effected, Lt.-Col. Keating being early on shore. The debarkation of men and stores went on rapidly and without serious accident, but it was August 21st before the task was completed. The bunder boats which had been prepared for landing purposes could not get within one hundred yards of the beach at high water and at other states of the tide they were not less than 700 yards from the shore, which was quite flat, with a coral

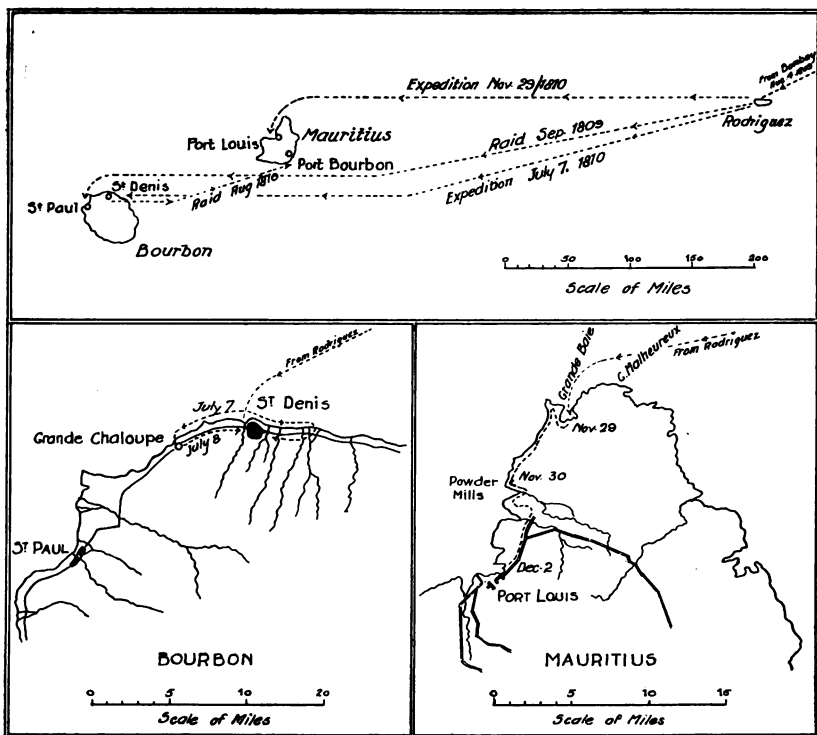


LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR HENRY SHEEHY KEATING, K.C.B
From the National Portrait Gallery.

bottom in places. The Island was annexed in the name of the English East India Company, the sole population being three French settlers and their families. Lieut.-Colonel Keating established his headquarters at a spot contiguous to the anchorage, having an excellent water supply from two small rivulets, which the oldest settler had never known to run dry. "The water," wrote Colonel Keating, "is certainly of a very superior quality and found to answer particularly well for long voyages. We have timber nearby of every kind and in a few weeks we shall be able to wood and water all ships landing here with great facility and expedition." This was an essential point, for Rodriguez was to be the base of important operations. Keating was very pleased with his little kingdom: "My entire time being directed towards landing the stores and provisions and the forming of batteries, I am not able to give a minute description of the Island, but in a general way I am able to state it has very far surpassed my expectation. There are some of the most delightful valleys I ever saw and the soil, naturally rich in one of the finest climates of the world, is capable of producing every sort of vegetable and there is a sufficient quantity of land already cleared for cultivation and for the feeding of cattle. I regret, however, to say that we have arrived nine weeks too late for the present season, except garden seeds, which thrive here wonderfully well. Fruits of every climate grow here in the most luxurious manner. There is one plantation of cotton, which is of superior quality to any in India, and the French prize it far beyond what grows at the Isles of France and Bourbon. I intend to encourage this plant very much." Which shows what an enterprising business man Colonel Keating would have been had he not been a soldier first. Happily for the British rule in the Eastern sea, the spirit of enterprise led him far afield and with great results, though he remained, as he wrote to the Court of Directors, after the seizure of Mauritius in 1810, "as poor as any soldier ought to be."

The little fortified settlement was called Fort Duncan, after Mr. Jonathan Duncan, the President and Governor of the Council of Bombay Presidency. Keating immediately devoted himself to the construction of small wooden houses substantial enough to endure the strong winds of the hurricane season, which commenced in December. A hospital for the use of both army and navy was also built, with large storehouses. He pleaded with the Bombay Board for an increase of the garrison, as it was erroneous to suppose that there were only one or two landing places—"the Island is twenty miles long from east to west and eight broad, and when the tide is out every point is vulnerable and troops may land upon every part of it. This I state from the report of the settlers, who have been in the habit of fishing all round the island and who state that they themselves have

landed upon every part of it." The health of the troops, which had not been good on board ship, rapidly improved, for whereas nearly one hundred sick were disembarked and symptoms of scurvy among the troops were plentiful, within a few days only seven men caused anxiety. It was not long before Keating soon experienced the troubles of a pioneer. Care had been taken to ship potatoes and garden seeds, but a large proportion of the former had been used for food owing to the unexpected length of the voyage and yams were hurriedly despatched from Bombay in their place. The garden seeds did not come up to expectation. One box, upon examination, was found to be almost full of old canvas, the few packages of seed at the bottom being in such a state as to be useless. Bombay ordered strict enquiry into this matter. Then, too, the supply of cattle was not sufficient to meet the needs of the fleet and garrison. There were landed 28 head of cattle, 12 buffaloes, 138 sheep, 158 pigs, with goats, geese and ducks, and to reinforce the supply two officers were despatched to Madagascar to purchase horned cattle, sheep, goats and poultry of all kinds. A currency had also to be established and, in response to Keating's request, the Company forwarded two thousand rupees' worth of pice and one thousand half-rupees. A site was set apart for the establishment of a bazaar, and stern steps were taken to regulate the supply of liquor and to prevent the landing of unauthorized shipments. The demand for labour entailed correspondence with Bombay and the tactful handling of Colonel Keating by the administration. He wrote that he had also asked the officers detailed for Madagascar to procure a few slaves, "as I find that this is the mode adopted by the settlers and the cheapest and best towards ensuring a constant supply of vegetables, etc. I, however, request you to make known to me the pleasure of the Government upon this subject, as when the slaves arrive it is my intention to order the cattle-feeders, with all the idle followers, to return to Bombay, there to be discharged at the pleasure of the Honourable Board." The diplomatic reply of the Board is worth reproducing in full: "With respect to the measure announced of procuring slaves for the cultivation of the Government farms, the Governor-in-Council would prefer that the purchase or employment of slaves could be dispensed with and also that the Government farms should be cultivated on private account rather than on public if it can be done. If, however, the employment of slaves be absolutely necessary, it must be acquiesced in and temporarily submitted to rather than to lose the object of the cultivation of the Island and the consequent provision for its inhabitants. Under the eventual operation of this necessity it would, however, be more agreeable to the Honourable Board that these slaves (if it can be done with safety) be entertained and employed in any other character at a monthly rate of hire less than the



D.H.Burles

Plan showing the course of the operations conducted against the Islands of Bourbon & Mauritius.

cattle feeders and followers, as such a modification of their condition would be more consonant to the principles of the British Constitution. If, however, the arrangements here recommended for your eventual adoption prove impracticable or obviously inexpedient, that plan you have entered on must be supported with every reliance that you will attend to the humane treatment of the slaves during their servitude under the Honourable Company. With regard to the cattle-feeders and followers who will be dismissed in case the slaves are entertained, you will still hold out encouragement to them to remain on the Island by granting them lands to cultivate or by such other prospect of employment as may induce them to stay as long as the detachment, not, however, in the service of the Honourable Company, but in prosecuting their interest by an industrious application to their labour."

HOW HE RAIDED THE TOWN OF ST. PAUL'S.

Keating promised to attend to the Council's desires, but he was not long satisfied to remain absorbed in domestic details. His mind was continually occupied with the ambitious scheme of reducing the Isle of Bourbon and the Isle of France (Mauritius) and he found an ever vigilant and sagacious comrade in Commodore Josias Rowley (later Admiral Sir Josias Rowley, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.) Both of them were happily destined to live to see the fulfilment of their desires. Operating from these two Islands, French cruisers and privateers had met with such success that in 1807, says Fortescue, Calcutta alone suffered a loss of £200,000 within six weeks. It was, therefore, not long before Rowley and Keating were turning their attention to the Isle of Bourbon, particularly to the capacious harbour of St. Paul, which sheltered French cruisers and their rich British prizes. After enquiry these two enterprising spirits evolved a plan for raiding the port, seizing the ships and destroying the forts and their ordnance, a movement which, if successful, would prove of immense assistance to the attempts already in mind to seize both Bourbon and Mauritius. On September 16th, 1809, Colonel Keating embarked 368 officers and men, who included the detachment of the 56th, for an attack upon St. Paul's, leaving 238 officers and men as garrison of Rodriguez, under Captain McIntosh, of the Bombay Artillery. This party, with batteries then completed and H.M.S. "Sapphire" cruising off the Island, Colonel Keating held to be amply sufficient to guard against external attack. The expeditionary force was conveyed by H.M.S. "Le Nereide" and "Otter," and the India Company's cruiser "Wasp," and arrived off Port Louis, Isle of France, on the evening of September 18th, where the "Raisonné" (Commodore Rowley) and "Sirius" were lying. Next morning, the 19th, the attacking troops, naval and military, to the number of 604, were put on board "Le Nereide" (Captain Corbet) and

at dusk the squadron sailed for Bourbon and reached St. Paul's on the morning of the 20th. Arrangements for the operation had been carefully made and orders were then issued to the commanders of the columns of attack. The object of the enterprise was to secure the batteries of St. Paul's and by so doing to compel the enemy's shipping in the harbour to surrender to the ships of the Royal Navy. The little force was divided into three columns—No. 1 (Captain Forbes) was the reserve, composed of 80 men of the Pompadours and 80 marines; No. 2 (Captain Imlack), 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Regiment of Native Infantry, and No. 3, 100 sailors under Captain Willoughby, R.N., and the remainder of the Pompadours and Marines under Captain Hanna. Precise instructions were given as to the route to be taken by each column and a map provided for guidance. Lieut.-Colonel Keating was to land with the reserve column, which was to cover the debarkation of the rest of the men, who, as soon as they were ashore, were to be sent forward. The reserve column was to move along the road leading into St. Paul's until it passed the bridge over the lake, after which it was to swerve to the left and take possession of the barracks and the eight brass field pieces which were known to be in front of the buildings. This duty accomplished, the reserve column was to proceed against the battery on the left known as La Pire and after destroying the guns and magazines to move to La Centiere, where it would receive further orders. The second column, after passing the River Galette, was to march along the sea coast until it reached the rivulet that ran from the lake into the bay, and then to incline left towards the lake by the bed of the rivulet until it had passed the right flank of the battery there. After that it would move to the right again towards the sea, which would bring it within pistol shot of the rear of the battery Lamboucere, of which it would immediately take possession and spike the guns, proceeding then to the battery La Centiere for further directions from the commanding officer. The third column (with Colonel Keating) was to move upon La Centiere, which was considered the main post, and after securing that point was to take possession of another battery, La Neuf. Colonel Keating added: "The batteries are all supposed open to the land. The only thing, therefore, that the officers and men have to guard against are some long iron spikes, commonly called crow's feet, which are placed rather thickly for the defence of the rear of the batteries. The men are on no account to load until ordered. Everything is to be carried by the bayonet, which has never been known to fail when directed by Englishmen."

So much for the plan of action; let us see how it succeeded. At 5 a.m. on the 21st the troops were landed to the south of Point des Galets, about seven miles from St. Paul's, and immediately marched with all possible speed for the causeway across the lake,

which was secured and passed before the enemy were aware of the landing. By 7 a.m. the first and second batteries (Lamboucere and La Centiere) had been seized and Captain Willoughby turned the guns upon the shipping and plied it with a well-directed fire of grape, but which also caused casualties among the troops, who were exposed to it as they moved along the beach and through the town. From La Centiere Captain Imlack's native infantry were ordered to take La Neuf, which had been deserted by the enemy. On their way there, however, they fell in with the main body of the French, who had taken up a very strong position behind a stone road, with the eight 6-pounder brass field pieces protecting their flanks. Captain Imlack and his men advanced gallantly and very quickly became warmly engaged. Captain Hanna (56th) was ordered to their support with the third column and, moving on the flank, charged home and seized two of the guns. "The action now became warm, but never doubtful," we are told. But the situation must have caused some anxiety at this juncture, for the enemy were reinforced by parties from the hills and 110 troops of the line from the French frigate "La Caroline." The British squadron could not give adequate covering fire for fear of endangering the safety of the British troops. In these circumstances Captain Willoughby was directed to spike the guns of Lamboucere and La Centiere, and man the third battery, La Neuf, from which he could bombard the shipping. This movement enabled Captain Forbes and his men also to advance upon the obstinate Frenchmen. The remaining guns were seized by them and the enemy then gave way, being pursued by small detachments specially detailed to act as light troops. The third column and part of the reserve also secured the fourth and fifth batteries (La Piere and La Caserne) without opposition, the guns of which were then turned upon the shipping. By 8.30 a.m. the town was in our hands. Perceiving this, the British squadron stood in and the shipping surrendered. The batteries were wholly destroyed and the town thus being completely commanded by the ships, the men were re-embarked by 8 p.m. Late on the evening of the 22nd the enemy appeared in some force upon the hills and a heavy column was observed advancing from St. Denis, under the command of General des Brusleys. In face of this threat a party of seamen and marines were landed by Captain Willoughby and destroyed all public property, whilst on the morning of the 23rd the columns were again placed in boats, but did not land, because the force from St. Denis had retreated during the night. The same day the Commandant of St. Michel, on board the "Raisonnable," signed the preliminaries of capitulation, subject to confirmation by General des Brusleys. Guards were placed for the protection of the inhabitants and from the 25th to the 28th the troops were busily employed in destroying guns and munitions. On October 1st the acting Governor of the

Island (M. Marchant) refused to ratify the convention and the next day Rowley and Keating decided to seize St. Gilles. This small port was protected by two strong batteries, where there was a good harbour for small craft and an excellent watering place for the squadron. Arrangements were made for entering the town by midnight, but it was not so successful as the effort against St. Paul's, for owing to some mistake the boats in which Captain Hanna and 100 men of the 56th Regiment were carried stood too far out to sea and did not reach the debarkation point until five o'clock the next morning (3rd). Captain Willoughby and a small party of seamen landed with Lieut.-Colonel Keating on the night of the 2nd at Point des Egrettes and were fortunate in obtaining efficient guides. The "Raisonné," with the reserve on board, stood along the shore in support. The plucky detachment entered the town and destroyed the guns, batteries and public property.

This brilliant exploit, the taking of St. Paul's, which was marked by perfect co-operation between the two services, resulted in the recapture of two East Indiamen—"Streatham" (819 tons) and "Europe" (820 tons), with a brig named the "Fanny." The French frigate, "La Caroline" (46 guns) and "Grappler," brig (11 guns), and two trading brigs were also secured, whilst three chase mares were destroyed and another ship burnt on the stocks. The ordnance rendered useless was very considerable, comprising 37 24-pounders, 16 18-pounders, 19 12-pounders, 12 9-pounders, one 6-pounder, nine 4-pounders, four 12-pounder carronades, eight brass field pieces, with five mortars of varying sizes. The casualties at the landing of St. Paul's were 72 killed and wounded, of whom the 56th had six killed, 24 wounded and one missing out of a total personnel of eight officers and 193 N.C.O.'s and men. The captured ships were ordered to the Cape of Good Hope, 160 men of the 56th, in two parties, serving on the "La Nereide" and "Caroline" as marines.

In forwarding Lieut.-Colonel Keating's despatches to the Governor-General, the Governor-in-Council of the Bombay Presidency expressed his approval "of the arrangements made by you for carrying that brilliant enterprise into effect, but he has remarked with peculiar satisfaction the judgment displayed in the prompt and decided manner in which you availed yourself of the information transmitted to you by Commodore Rowley relative to the position and force of the enemy and admires the spirit and rapidity with which you advanced from the point of disembarkation to the town of St. Paul's. To these measures, aided by the gallantry and undaunted courage of H.M. and Hon. Company's naval and land force employed on the expedition, he ascribes the honourable and completely successful termination of the service from which the public have derived a considerable advantage and the British arms in this quarter of the globe have acquired an additional lustre." Among the officers specially

brought to the Governor-General's notice were Captains Forbes and Hanna and Ensign Pearce, of the 56th.

HOW HE SEIZED THE ISLAND OF BOURBON.

An attempt followed to occupy permanently both the Isle of Bourbon and Mauritius. The first effort was against the former place and the reason why the more distant island was chosen is disclosed in a report which Colonel Keating made, on June 26th, 1810, to Mr. R. T. Farquhar, the civil representative of the East India Company in those waters. In this document he stated: "From various information, it is understood that the chief supply of grain for the consumption of the Isle of France (Mauritius) is done from Bourbon. The vessels which trade to the coast of Madagascar, from whence they procure supplies of slaves and cattle, probably belong to the Isle of France, but in consequence of that Island being more closely watched by the British squadron they are obliged to land their cargoes in some harbour of the Isle of Bourbon; therefore, as the principal depot of provisions, the reduction of which must necessarily distress the superior island and from which improved efficiency of the blockade will immediately take place, it is presumed the surrender of the Isle of France must ultimately follow, though our documents of information do not warrant us in stating that such surrender will be the immediate consequence."

The troops employed, which included the detachment of the 56th, were again commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Keating, who was informed by the Governor-General of India that he had been designated to that post because of the successful operation against St. Paul's. The force of 4,000 men was divided into four brigades, the detachment of the 56th serving with the fourth brigade, under Lieut.-Colonel Campbell, which also comprised the flank companies of the 12th and 33rd Regiments. The flotilla arrived off St. Denis, the capital of Bourbon, on July 7th, 1810, and a landing was immediately effected. The first brigade, under Fraser, seized Grand Chaloupe, six miles west of the town, and, advancing upon St. Denis, cut the road connecting the capital with St. Paul. The remainder of the troops were ordered to disembark at Rivière des Pluies, three miles east of St. Denis, but the surf interfered with the movement. Several soldiers were drowned and only one hundred and fifty wet and half-armed men had been landed when the enemy started firing upon them. Commodore Rowley then ran one of the transports ashore and by this means another small party was landed. The detachment of the 56th were with these troops and Captain Hanna, with two companies of the Regiment, was ordered to take La Possessime, a small fort, three miles distant, which he did by assault in the most gallant manner, with the loss of two men killed and two wounded. Colonel Keating ordered the remainder of his force

to Grand Chaloupe, where they landed during the next day. Meanwhile, Fraser's brigade had dispersed some three hundred French regular troops, and was reinforced by part of the second brigade. On the evening of the 8th the Governor proposed a cessation of arms and Major J. Blakeston, of the Madras Engineers, in "Twelve Years' Military Adventure" (1829), thus describes the final scene: Colonel Keating not being yet arrived, Colonel Fraser sent me into the town with the officer bearing the flag of truce to inform the Commandant that, not being empowered to treat, he could not, in the absence of the commanding officer, take upon himself to agree to a suspension of hostilities unless he were put in possession of some of the posts on the opposite side of the river. But no sooner had I reached the Commandant's, having previously gone through the operation of being blindfolded on passing the defences, than I met Colonel Keating in the act of entering the house, having come at full gallop from Grand Chaloupe and made his way, by some means or other, through the enemy's outposts into the town. He began, in his usual brusque manner, by informing the Commandant in broken French that he was the identical Colonel Keating commanding the expedition, and that he had, contrary to the ordinary practice of war, come in person in order that he might preserve the town and garrison, for a column with which he had not the means of communicating was then advancing from St. Mary's with orders to attack the town without delay; and that the only way to prevent the consequences was to surrender at discretion. The French Governor, a mild, quiet kind of man, seemed not to understand this summary way of going to work. "*Mais, Monsieur le Colonel,*" said he, "*nous avons des bonnes postes.*" "Posts or no posts," says Colonel Keating, "if you don't surrender this minute I can't answer for your life." The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders, repeated his observations and attempted to put on a determined air; but this would not do. "There's a devil of a fellow commanding that column from St. Mary's," added the Colonel, "and your old friend Willoughby is there also" (Willoughby was a well-known naval officer, feared for his daring activity). At the sound of the latter name the Governor started. A distant shot was now heard. "There they are, close to your gates," says Colonel Keating, "You had better make haste; you shall have the honours of war and private property shall be respected, but nothing more." In short, the poor Governor was fairly bullied out of his island. Not but what there were troops enough to take half a dozen such islands.

The Isle of Bourbon thus passed into British hands on August 10th, at a cost of 97 casualties, one regiment (86th) having 69, presumably whilst evicting the French from their defensive position. A party of the 56th, under Lieutenant Mallet, provided the escort for the surrendered French troops to the Cape of Good Hope.

The Governor-General again expressed his satisfaction with the work of the naval squadron, under Commodore Rowley, and "the diligence and activity manifested by Lieut.-Colonel Keating in obtaining the most accurate and detailed information relative to the chief defences of the Island, the nature of the country and the extent and distribution of the enemy's forces, the professional skill and judgment displayed in the plan of attack which that information enabled him to form and the energy and ability of that meritorious and gallant officer in directing and superintending the operations of the force under his orders demand the expression of his Lordship-in-Council's distinguished approbation and applause." This public expression of approval was supplemented by a private letter equally eulogistic, in which the Governor General made known that he hoped also for the conquest of Java (accomplished later), after Mauritius had been taken, adding "I have looked in the general scheme of measures now on foot to the evacuation of every European enemy from the seas and territories eastward of the Cape." Mr. Farquhar became Governor of the Island and appointed Lieut.-Colonel Keating Lieutenant-Governor, with jurisdiction over the south-western quarter, his headquarters being at St. Paul's.

OCCUPATION OF MAURITIUS.

Preparations immediately ensued for the seizure of Mauritius. As a preliminary, Farquhar asked the opinion of Rowley and Keating upon two points:—

(1) Whether any force or means can be advantageously employed against the enemy from this Island (Bourbon) previously to the arrival of the force from India and the Cape (for the reduction of the Isle of France) and, if they can, to what extent and in what manner?

(2) What arrangements are recommended with a view to the junction of the forces from India, the Cape and Bourbon for the regular attack upon the Isle of France?

Both officers recommended the concentration of the army at Rodriguez, and then the seizure of the Isle de la Passe, defending the south-eastern entrance of Port Bourbon. Commodore Rowley added that in this way one of the enemy's ports of shelter would be shut against him and the squadron enabled more strictly to blockade the remainder. Colonel Keating also suggested the fitting out of a bomb vessel for the annoyance of Port Louis and the distribution of proclamations round the Isle de la Passe district notifying the inhabitants of the seizure of the Isle of Bourbon.

An enterprise was accordingly directed against this entrance to Port Bourbon and the seizure of the Isle de la Passe, as recommended, was attended with success. Unfortunately, the naval commander (Captain Willoughby) went further and

endeavoured to secure the French vessels in the port, and was sorely handled. There was a serious loss of ships and for a time British supremacy in these waters was affected. This was quickly restored by vessels from the Cape of Good Hope station, but whilst matters lay in the balance the commander-in-chief of the expedition against Mauritius, Sir John Abercromby, son of the victor in Egypt, was captured in a frigate by two French frigates, but recovered next day by the "Boadicea," Commodore Rowley's flagship.

In October and November ships and men came in from the Indian station until ten thousand troops were assembled, three-fifths of whom were Europeans. Two companies of the 56th were with the reserve brigade, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Keating, the conqueror of Rodriguez and Bourbon. The voyage to Mauritius, late in November, 1810, was another fine feat of seamanship, for seventy vessels were steered past Cape Malheroux, the most northerly point of the Island, and through a channel "never before attempted by any British vessels and never used by the French except in cases of extreme need. Yet this feat was boldly undertaken and successfully accomplished; the entire armament coming to an anchor on the 29th less than a mile from the shore without the slightest mishap." A landing was effected in Grande Baie, about twelve miles from Port Louis, and first by the beach and then through a thick wood the little army pushed on towards the capital. When emerging from the trees a small party of national guards fired upon them, wounding Lieut.-Colonel Keating and twelve men, so that presumably his brigade was supplying the advance guard. The coast road was traversed for another mile and then, suffering much from thirst and fatigue, a halt was called for the night. The march was resumed at daybreak and a rest ordered for the daylight hours at a powder mill beside a stream, when a reconnaissance in force by the enemy was beaten off. There was stiff fighting early on December 1st, when Abercromby's column was opposed at the River des Citrons, and particularly at the southern branch of the river, formerly known as the Rivière Seche. There the enemy were posted, with artillery, on the other side of the stream, but Abercromby promptly outflanked them, dispersed them and captured three guns. Keating's brigade was prominently employed, the 56th losing five killed in addition to the wounded. The way was opened to Port Louis, and the lofty Montagne Longue, commanding the town, was quickly occupied. In these circumstances the French commander, De Caen, a trusted subordinate of Napoleon's, capitulated, one condition being that the French soldiers and sailors should be conveyed back to France. Thus it was that Mauritius passed to British possession,

1. "History of the Army," p. 603, Vol. VII. (*Fortescue*).

with 200 guns and 86 ships, 2,000 British prisoners being liberated.

The Pompadours did not take part in the operations which completed the clearance of the Indian Seas by the capture of Java, a little known but brilliantly conducted campaign by Sir Samuel Auchmuty. When the first battalion was at Bellary towards the end of 1811 the detachment rejoined the Regiment, the East India Company expressing appreciation of its services by the presentation of new colours.

It would seem that Colonel Keating was offered a brigade command in the expedition against Java, but the wound received in the taking of Mauritius probably prevented acceptance, and in March, 1812, he was promoted to command the Bourbon Regiment. The facts are alluded to in a letter which the Colonel addressed to the Court of the East India Company in London, and which is here reproduced, for it reveals this energetic officer as vigorous a penman as he was a soldier. It is dated from Port Louis, December 7th, 1810, and runs: My letter of the 15th of last July will have acquainted you for the information of the Right Honourable Court of Directors of the occupation of Bourbon by troops of His Majesty and the Honourable Company serving under my command, and I then had the honour to state that before the month of April there should not be a French flag in these seas. I now have the honour of congratulating the Hon. Board upon the final conquest of the colony by His Majesty's and Honourable Company's forces under the orders of His Excellency Lieut.-General Abercromby. His Excellency Captain-General De Caen did not indulge us even with a sharp fight for this valuable prize. We have had some skirmishing between the reserve and the French army, in which the troops of the reserve evinced great steadiness and bravery. Our commander supported throughout this service the great name of Abercromby and if I could add more to his praise he is deserving of it. The Island of Java is the next object, which, on account of the annexation of Holland to France, has become of great consequence just now, and must be occupied before it ripens under the enterprising General Daendels into a place of greater security and strength. I know it is the intention of the Right Hon. Governor-General of India to collect a sufficient force for the immediate conquest of Java and his Lordship has been pleased to invite me to the command of a brigade, which my perfect knowledge of the country makes me anxious to accept. At present I am writing from my couch in much pain, having received a severe wound through my leg; indeed, circumstances force me at present to be less active respecting these colonies than I could wish. My Lord Minto has been pleased to appoint me Lieut.-Governor of the Island of Bourbon and provisional successor of the Hon. Mr. Farquhar in the government of the Island. As I have no friends in England to support my interest, nor did I ever look for

any, and as I must be perfectly unknown to your Hon. Board, I cannot expect to hold the high official position very long; indeed, my services are too humble to entitle me to it, and I am as poor as any soldier ought to be. I, however, beg to assure the Hon. Board, through you, that I am a very faithful servant to the public and that I have for years supported the interests of His Majesty and the Hon. Company in the East. The Government of India have been pleased to inform you that I have led to the final conquest of these colonies and thereby added to the security of our trade in these seas, as they only followed up my plans on the information which I had the honour to communicate to them before and after the attack on the town and shipping at St. Paul's last September, where I undertook all the responsibility upon myself. . . . After the disasters which occurred to our four frigates in the Grand Port the 24th August last, an event which gave the enemy a temporary superiority and command in the seas, which was likely to have frustrated our expedition against Mauritius, I laboured night and day to prepare a naval force to meet the enemy and have been amply recompensed by the success which my exertions led to under the command of my gallant friend, Commodore Rowley, who is the bearer of Admiral Bertie's despatches to the Admiralty and to whom I take the liberty of referring your Hon. Board for any information respecting these colonies which they may be pleased to require. Indeed, there is no one more capable of satisfying the Hon. Board upon such a point. The many years which Commodore Rowley commanded before these islands has given him more opportunity of obtaining information than has fallen to the lot of any other officer."

It is not surprising that the Directors of the India Company, on hearing the news of the taking of Mauritius, presented Lieut.-Colonel Keating with the sum of 500 guineas for the purchase of a piece of plate in acknowledgment "of that spirit of zealous emulation with which he seconded the successful efforts of Captain Rowley to crush the momentary superiority lately obtained by the enemy in the Indian Seas." What is equally pleasing is that his gallant comrade, Commodore Rowley, was the recipient of a similar mark of appreciation. Colonel Keating was also the recipient of a sword of honour from the merchants of Calcutta and the freedom of the city of Cork.

Before passing on to other phases of the history of the 2nd Essex, it will be appropriate to append a short account of Colonel Keating's distinguished military career. He came of a well-known Irish family. His grandfather, John Keating, was in the army and died at Annapolis, America, in 1718. Bryan Keating was his second son. He married a daughter of Roger Sheehy and had four sons. The first born, Robert Sheehy, of Ballin Collig, married a niece of the Earl of Clanrickard. George was a cornet

of the 16th Dragoons and served in the Peninsular War, whilst another, John Keating, settled in Limerick. The second son was Henry, the subject of this notice. He was gazetted to the 33rd Regiment of Foot on August 31st, 1793, as Henry J., but when he became captain in 1796 he was described as Henry S.; he was more fully noted as Henry Samuel when transferred to the 56th as major, on September 3rd, 1800, and simply as Samuel Keating when appointed to the command. Later the second Christian name was given as Sheehy and until he died, full of honours, in 1847, he was known as Henry Sheehy Keating. He quickly saw active service with the 33rd Regiment, for he was in Martinique under Sir Charles Grey in 1794 and was present at the affair of La Trinité, the attack on Mont Rouge and Mont Calabasse, where his sword arm was broken by a musket shot, for which he subsequently received a wounds pension. Sharing in the defence of Berville Camp, he was again severely wounded, this time suffering from head injury caused by a splinter of shell. When taken prisoner he was for eighteen months confined in a prison ship and then was for three months at Rochelle. Upon release he was for a time employed as a brigade major and afterwards became major of the 56th, then stationed in Ireland, being also for a time recruiting officer in County Mayo. With the Regiment he went to India in 1807, as lieutenant-colonel, and subsequently performed the brilliant service mentioned above. Keating commanded the Bourbon Regiment from 1812 to its disbandment in 1816, during which time he became brevet colonel. He was promoted major-general in 1819 and lieutenant-general in 1837. In recognition of his services, he was made a Knight Commander of the Bath and he was also gazetted successively Colonel of the 90th, 54th and 33rd Regiments, the last-named appointment being made just over two years before his death, which took place at Cheltenham on September 12th, 1847. His property was bequeathed to his son, the Right Hon. Sir Henry Singer Keating. The captor of Bourbon paid a visit to Napoleon at St. Helena in July, 1816, and in Forsyth's "History of the Captivity of Napoleon," compiled from the letters and journals of Sir Hudson Lowe, there is a lengthy reference to the conversation which Colonel Keating had with the exiled Emperor and which was related to the author by the Colonel's son: "About this time (April, 1816) Colonel (afterwards Lieut.-General Sir Henry) Keating, who was on his way from the Mauritius, had an interview with Napoleon and a curious conversation took place between them, which was detailed by that officer to the Prince Regent. What renders it more interesting is that it was repeated by the Prince to the late King of the French, who made a full note of it in his journal dated at Twickenham. This was, with other private papers, pillaged at the Tuileries in the Revolution of 1848. The family of the dethroned monarch must acknowledge that Napoleon spoke with prophetic intelligence

and that his words have been strikingly verified by the events which have placed his nephew upon the throne of France. He told Colonel Keating that England would soon have need of him and would remove him from St. Helena. It was impossible that the Bourbons should retain power in France and that recourse must be had to himself or son, in either of which cases he would be summoned to Europe. He said that if his brother Joseph had not been a fool (*benet*) he would have enlightened Spain and then the Bourbons would have had no hold there. 'But,' he continued, 'I speak not of my brother. The question is about my son. It is he who is necessary to France and France will have him because she cannot do without him. I must speak to your Prince Regent. He has sense and spirit and would understand what I have to say to him. Europe, and especially France, are too enlightened to be caught by the stupid nonsense which the old monarchs and courts talk about legitimacy, divine right, the throne and the altar. I know well it requires a rod of iron to rule men, but it must be gilded and we must make them believe when we strike them that they direct the blow themselves. It is necessary always to talk of liberty, equality and justice, and never grant any liberty whatever. No change of system is required, only a change of language and if we talk to the people of liberty and equality I answer for it that they be easily oppressed and pay down to their last farthing without being tempted to rise or feel any real discontent'." In the Record Office is a letter from Colonel Keating to Lord Bathurst asking if Napoleon was still in St. Helena, as he had made a bet that the Emperor would still be a prisoner on the date mentioned, January 20th, 1819. Sir Henry was sent with his brothers to be educated at the English Jesuit College in Liege, which was swept away by the French Revolution. To the Catholic belief he remained faithful throughout his life and it is said that he was the first Catholic promoted to the rank of general, or above that of colonel, after the higher military grades were opened to officers of that faith in 1817.



LATER YEARS.

FAITHFUL SERVICE IN THE EAST.

Other service by the first battalion is worthy of notice. Early in 1809 a second detachment, under Lieut. J. E. Cairnes, was shipped as marines on board the "Psyche" in a campaign against the Rajah of Travancore. Under cover of the ship's guns, the men stormed a strong battery commanding Colatchi Bay, which assisted materially in the capture of the capital, Travandrum. Meanwhile, another detachment, under Lieut. Warren, also served against the Rajah of Cochin (who had joined the Rajah of Travancore). It was placed on board a Piedmontese frigate and landed at Quilon, where punitive measures had been rendered necessary by the cruel treatment received by a party of the 12th Regiment. The rest of the first battalion was ordered to Madras in July, 1809, in the frigate "Cornwallis" and the transports "Wyndham" and "Bheemoolah." Serious tension had arisen with the officers in the service of the Company owing to the reduction of certain allowances, the irritation being increased by tactless treatment of their grievances. The presence of the battalion was not needed for long and in October of that year it was transferred to Bellary, where, as we have said, the detached parties subsequently reported for duty, including a reinforcing draft which had been temporarily stationed at Goa. In September, 1812, the 56th were part of the field force under Colonel Dowse which enforced the payment of arrears of tribute from the Ranees of Rasee, in the southern Mahratta country. It suffered severely from disease, losing 350 men, and was so depleted in strength that it was ordered to Bellary and subsequently to Fort St. George, Madras. When the Regiment left Colonel Dowse issued an order highly commending the exemplary conduct of the 56th and stating that in no instance had any well-grounded complaint come to his knowledge against a single individual of the corps. The return of Bonaparte created unrest among the French settlers of Mauritius and the first battalion, reinforced by 300 men from the third battalion, making it nearly 1,100 strong, hastily embarked for that Island in 1815, under the command of Colonel Barclay, in the "Salsette," frigate, and the Company's ships, "Rose" and "Streatham." Upon leaving, the Governor of the Madras Presidency expressed in general orders his "warmest approbation of the uniform good conduct of the Regiment." Whilst at Port Louis, in September, 1816, the Pompadours performed valuable service in preventing a conflagration from reaching the Government buildings and thus involving the town, two men losing their lives whilst so doing. Sergeant Hasty, of the 56th, had the

distinction of being specially mentioned by the Governor, who stated : " I conscientiously believe that it was in a great measure owing to Sergt. Hasty that the whole town of Port Louis was not swallowed by the flames. His persevering fortitude and intrepid confidence enabled him to save the Government House by remaining among the flames when most others had despaired ; and it is universally allowed that had the Government house been burned, the remainder of the town must immediately have followed, and the whole population of Port Louis left homeless among the smoking ruins !" Sergeant Hasty subsequently entered the service of the Governor. He was a man of unusual ability and was selected to instruct two of the princes of Ova, Madagascar, in the English language. He afterwards became British Resident at Madagascar and when on a visit to Mauritius had the compliment of being received by a guard of his old regiment, commanded by his former captain. The 56th left Port Louis on March 1st, 1817, for Flacq and then for Mahebourg, where the colours of the second battalion were handed over. Whilst at Mahebourg the Regiment was employed in the suppression of the slave trade. About this time a draft of 60 joined from England after travelling via New South Wales and Bengal.

WITH THE SECOND BATTALION.

The second battalion of the 56th, when sailing for India in June, 1807, had a stormy voyage, in the course of which the vessels carrying the first division were scattered and had to put into Simon's Bay for refit, not arriving in Madras until December, under convoy of the frigate " Greyhound." The battalion proceeded thence to Bombay, where it was in garrison with the first battalion. In January, 1809, it marched to Barachia, near Surat, from which place four companies were detached to Baroda, under Captain D. Daly, as part of column, under Lieut.-Colonel Walker, destined for the pacification of the Kattawar country, in the Guzerat peninsula, and the seizure of the fort of Mallia. The latter stronghold had resisted native efforts at capture and when the British troops arrived its defences had been strengthened by an embankment of earth and thorns round the wall. A breach was made by artillery and at 4 p.m. on July 17th, 1809, the place was assaulted. The forlorn hope was commanded by Captain McKenzie, of the Bombay European Regiment, who had serving with him Lieut. Newman, of the 56th. The Regiment also furnished 150 men to the storming party. The attack was conducted with great spirit. Captain Mackenzie, who was killed, was the first to ascend the breach, immediately followed by Lieut. R. Newman. Within three quarters of an hour the troops were in possession of the town. The garrison retired into an inner fort and fighting then ceased for the night. When dawn came it was found that the defenders had fled through a sally-port,

a rearguard having preserved an appearance of occupation by desultory firing. The 56th, who lost six killed and thirteen wounded, were specially mentioned for their services on this occasion in general orders—"To Captain D. Daly, the officers and men of the 56th Regiment, the commanding officer returns his particular acknowledgments; they have nobly supported the reputation of the senior battalion in all the characteristics of good soldiers." "The commanding officer cannot omit the expression of his warmest acknowledgments to Captain Arnot, of the 56th Regiment, for his exertions at the erection of the batteries and for his conduct at the storm; and it would be injustice to withhold thanks to Lieut. Newman for his spirited support of Captain McKenzie in the advanced party." From Barachia the second battalion went back to Bombay and in October, 1812, was transferred to Colaba. Thence it proceeded to Dutch Bundes in March, 1813. Six companies, under Lieut.-Colonel Kingscote, formed part of the force which occupied the fort of Palampore, Scinde, for the purpose of restoring the heir to the throne. The chief difficulty encountered in this campaign was the heat, for in one march from Khim to Oclaseer across an arid, shelterless plain, a distance of eighteen miles, ten men died from the effects of heat and many more were completely exhausted. At the end of 1813 the second battalion was back at Domus, suffering much from Guzerat fever. The conduct of all ranks under these trying conditions was expressly mentioned in divisional orders. A change came to Barachia, then a voyage to Bombay and after a short period in the pendals at Colaba, the second battalion marched into the barracks at Fort George. In January, 1816, it joined the Poona subsidiary force, under Colonel Lionel Smith, then concentrating on the plain of Assaye. It was in cantonments at Jaulna during the monsoon and in August marched to Seroor, whence the flank and grenadier companies were detached for a short time to Poonah. In September, whilst at Jaulna, Lieut.-Colonel Kingscote was placed in charge of a lightly equipped column, supplied by the 56th, which chased a native chief who had murdered the minister of state of Guzerat. The fortified village of Nimgaum, on the banks of the Peera, was surrounded, but when its gates were opened as the artillery was about to fire, the fugitive could not be found. The pursuit was discontinued and the detachment rejoined the battalion at Seroor. Upon the dispersal of the Poonah subsidiary force, Colonel Lionel Smith highly praised the second battalion, stating in orders that there was not language of praise or thanks which could be too strong in describing the merits of such a corps. Peace having come, extensive reductions were made in the military forces and the second battalion of the 56th marched to Bombay in November, 1816, for the purpose of proceeding to England. Prior to embarkation it was thanked by the Governor-

General for its valuable services. Having left 400 men in India as volunteers for another regiment, the battalion companies sailed from India on January 9th, 1817, landing at Liverpool in the May following and being disbanded at Rochester on June 28th. The flank companies remained in Bombay until July, when they sailed for Portsmouth and were disbanded at Chatham on December 29th.

THIRD BATTALION IN HOLLAND.

The third battalion of the 56th was formed late in 1813, when Napoleon's star was setting and the European powers were closing in upon his armies and upon France. It was embodied at Horsham in the early part of November and its establishment of six hundred and fifty non-commissioned officers and men was mainly provided by volunteers from the Militia. The battalion was raised by Lieut.-Colonel J. F. Brown, formerly of the 28th Regiment, who was popularly credited with having given that distinguished regiment its nickname of "The Slashers." He was known in the Army as "John Brown of Barrosa" from the fact that at the battle of Barrosa he commanded a battalion of light infantry and thus pithily addressed them, "My lads, you now see the enemy before you; and, if you look round, I dare say behind you also. So what lucky fellows you are to have such an opportunity of distinguishing yourselves. You must thrash the scoundrels right soundly or they will assuredly give you a drubbing. Now hammer away at them with all your might." When he petitioned the Commander-in-Chief, as a major in the 28th Regiment, for promotion, he concluded his memorial thus, "For the period of thirty years the 28th Regiment never fired ball cartridge that John Brown was not present with it." Within a month the unit was passed for foreign service, for troops were urgently needed. A rising had taken place in Holland against French rule and a force of six thousand men was despatched in December of 1813 to co-operate with a Prussian force under General Bulow and a Russian contingent under Benckendorff. The 56th (400 strong) embarked at Ramsgate on December 9th, after the main part of the expedition had sailed, and joined General Gibbs' brigade (2/25th, 38rd, 54th and 3/56th), then concentrated near Williamstadt. In circumstances of considerable anxiety, Graham garrisoned Breda with Gibbs' brigade upon the departure of the Prussian force in January, 1814, and from this town a movement was subsequently devised in concert with the Prussian commander against Antwerp. The 56th were in the 1st Division, under General Cooke, their future comrades of the 44th being with the second brigade in the same division. The French were located during the advance at Merxem and there was sharp fighting for the village. The British force was fired upon and the 78th Highlanders (500 strong) were ordered to take the place with the

bayonet. This feat was gallantly accomplished, the Scotsmen being supported by the 56th, who had four men killed and fourteen wounded. The offensive against Antwerp was not pressed. Graham's troops fell back and were inactive for some days at Steenberg, Oudenbosch and Rozendaal. A forward movement was again concerted with the Prussians and on February 2nd five regiments, including the 56th, were directed to divert French attention from the Prussians by another attempt upon Merxem, which was again carried with little loss, the third battalion serving with distinction. Having cleared the wood on the right and left, says Cannon, "The 56th formed line and advanced, when they were ordered by Sir Thomas Graham, in person, to move to the right, charge through the village, ford the dike on the other side, take the enemy's battery and attack them on the left of their line. These orders were gallantly executed and two guns, which had annoyed the advance, were captured. The 56th sustained some loss from the enemy's fire and had several men drowned in crossing the dike, but they succeeded in gaining the left flank of the enemy and were warmly engaged until the French retired under the guns of Antwerp." The West Essex men then occupied the embankment of St. Ferdinand's dike under artillery fire. The loss was 13 killed and one officer and 24 wounded, Lieut.-Colonel Brown being mentioned in despatches. Upon this occasion Colonel Brown is said thus to have addressed the men, "Do you see those two guns and the rascals firing at us?" The men all looked in the direction indicated. "Let's take a run at them." "Away went John Brown and his Pompadors and carried the battery in an instant, with the loss of one or two men only. Such things as these may appear trifling on paper, but those who have the command of troops know the magic influence such unadorned oratory exercises over soldiers."¹ Severe labour ensued in constructing a breastwork and battery for the bombardment of Antwerp and the destruction of the French shipping in the Scheldt. The Prussians ceasing co-operation on marching to join the grand army then invading France, the attempt was abandoned, the 56th being sent to Rysburg, ten miles from Breda. Sir Thomas Graham had determined to storm the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom, but the third battalion was not with the attack, being with the covering force. It afterwards made a forced march to the fortress, but too late to retrieve the fortunes of that disastrous day in March. Further service followed against Antwerp and upon the abdication of Napoleon, the battalion marched into the city of the Scheldt, from whence it was moved to Ostend and reached Deal in September. It was disbanded at Sheerness on October 24th, 1814, after sending strong drafts to the two battalions then on service in India.

1. The references to Colonel Brown, mentioned above, are given in "Old-Stick-leg: Extracts from the Diaries of Major Thomas Austin, 1794-1881."

ORDERED HOME.

Upon return to Port Louis, in July, 1819, the 56th, a single battalion regiment once more, was inspected by Major-General Darling, who paid it a high compliment—"A finer body of men than composes this regiment is perhaps nowhere to be seen; they are clean and soldier-like in appearance, well appointed and in no respect deficient; in short, the care and attention of Lieut.-Colonel Barclay and of the officers and the good disposition of the men are evident, and could alone have led to the state in which the Fifty-Sixth Regiment now is. The school of the 56th is of less importance than in other corps, as most of the men are understood to read and write, though it will, of course, be of advantage to the children and, pursued on Dr. Bell's excellent system, as recommended by His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, it will prove of infinite importance." There was an outbreak of serious fires in 1820 and the Regiment was again praised for the part it took in getting them under. In 1826, after twenty years' service overseas, the West Essex were ordered home, the Governor, in a farewell order, stating that he was glad to have had the 56th in Mauritius, for "a corps distinguished for good conduct in quarters is always to be most depended upon in the presence of the enemy." Landing at Portsmouth in June, it left the naval town in September for Hull to join the depot companies, and, after a short term in Manchester, the Regiment embarked at Liverpool for Ireland in October, 1827. New colours were presented in the Irish capital on April 4th, 1828, bearing the words "Moro" and "Gibraltar," with a device of a Castle and Key and the motto *Montis Insignia Calpe*, which had been granted upon application of Colonel Barclay. Almost immediately afterwards the 56th were ordered to Londonderry, thence to Newry and to Birr. Whilst at the last-named station an inquiry was instituted by the Government into the system of records adopted by several regiments owing to the pension frauds which had been committed and it is satisfactory to learn that few instances of error or of fraud were traced to the 56th. In fact, the court complimented Colonel Barclay upon the manner in which he had carried out his duties in this respect. Lord Hill, the commander-in-chief, stated it was peculiarly gratifying to him to bear testimony to the successful and unremitting exertions of Colonel Barclay, which, while they reflected credit upon him, proved that, with diligence and a due adherence to regulations, the disreputable errors and frauds which had been discovered in other regiments could not have been effected. The Regiment was at Limerick in 1830 and at Fermoy the following year, when Colonel Barclay bade farewell after forty years with the 56th. He was appointed an ensign in June, 1791, and saw service in the West Indies, Holland and the East Indies, becoming major in 1804 and lieut.-colonel in 1811, retiring with the rank of colonel.

VARIED INCIDENTS.

Foreign service came again early in 1832, when, under Lieut.-Colonel H. H. Prichard, the Regiment left for Jamaica, the first station being Up Park Camp, Port Royal. Thence, in April, 1833, the Regiment was moved to Spanish Town, with two companies at Fort Augusta. Falmouth, on the north side of the Island, was the headquarters in 1834, but in 1837 the West Essex were back in Up Park Camp, where an outbreak of fever cost them three officers and sixty men. Health was improved by a prompt transfer to Fort Augusta and until they left Jamaica in March, 1840, for North America, they were successively at Spanish Town and Fort Augusta. H.M.S. "Apollo," upon which the Regiment embarked, was delayed ten days at Halifax by ice in the River St. Lawrence and it was not until May 7th that Quebec was reached. The Maine-New Brunswick boundary dispute had created intense feeling and the ship had not been at anchor for a couple of hours when a small detachment of the 56th, under Lieut. Turner, left to relieve a party of the 11th Regiment at Lake Temiscouata, in the territory at issue. Three companies, under Major Palmer, followed two days later to occupy Rivière du Loup, Fort Ingall, on Lake Temiscouata, and Begele. "The march of the detachment from Rivière du Loup to the two latter places by the Grand Portage, a dreary pass of thirty-six miles through dense forest, across an uninhabited country, by a road in the worst possible order, consequent on the breaking up of a Canadian winter, with mud and water frequently up to the knees, proved very trying to soldiers just arrived from a tropical climate and having been fifty-six days on board ship." The remainder of the Regiment was moved up river to Sorel, the light company being left at Three Rivers. Early in June Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Eden arrived with a reinforcement from the depot companies and took over command of the Regiment. On November 27th Colonel Eden and the light company moved to Madawaska settlement to prevent the Americans taking possession and although the journey of 200 miles in cars and sleighs was undertaken "with the thermometer varying from zero to twenty below, the company arrived at its destination without a casualty." Headquarters were removed to Chambly in June, 1841, and the detachments were relieved by the 68th Light Infantry, the officers having had a trying time. There were several desertions and on one occasion Lieut. T. Johnes Smith apprehended a man who had taken refuge in the American Block Houses at Fish River, for which he received the thanks of G.O.C.; Major-General Sir James Macdonell. In August, 1842, an arrangement was come to with the United States by mutual concession, but before that date the tension had been relieved. The Pompadours embarked

1. "Historical Record of the 56th Foot," p. 51. (*Cannon*).

in the troopship "Resistance" at Quebec and were at Cork on July 22nd, 1842, after a speedy voyage of seventeen days.

The Casual and Squad Roll Book of the Regiment of that date gives some interesting details of the men's arms, accoutrements and equipment. The weight carried by the private when in heavy marching order was 50lb. 1oz., comprising belts, pouch, bayonet, scabbard, sixty rounds of ammunition, knapsack, "with necessaries complete" (24lb.), firelock (10lb. 13oz.) and regimental and forage caps. The weight borne when in service order was 61lb. 1oz., the additional items being three days' rations, comprising 3lb. biscuit, 3lb. meat and one pint of rum, and one blanket weighing 4lb. The grenadier company still wore the bearskin. The pioneer appointments for one corporal and ten privates included leather aprons, pouches, slings, breast plates, bill hooks, with cases and girdles, and varying numbers of saws, with cases and belts, broad axes, with cases, spades, with cases and belts, felling axes, with cases, pickaxes and mattocks. In 1844, when at Fermoy, Ireland, the cost of the 4lb. loaf was returned at 5½d. and meat at 3½d. per lb.

The Regiment did duty at Birr and subsequently at Fermoy, with detachments in outlying districts, and proceeded in April, 1843, to Cork in readiness to embark for England, but the agitation for repeal of the Union was at its height and it was detained, detachments being furnished over a wide area of south-western Ireland. In 1844 the 56th were again at Fermoy, then at Kilkenny, and subsequently at the Royal Barracks, Dublin, from whence in December they were transferred to England, with headquarters at Bolton; then to Bury, in 1845—the year when the fatal potato disease first appeared in Ireland and the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws was reaching its height in England. Excellent recruiting was done in Lancashire, 459 men being obtained in seven weeks. For this service the commanding officer received the congratulations of the Duke of Wellington. The establishment was increased to 1,292, the intention being to form two battalions, a change which was effected late in the following year. Lieut.-Colonel Norman was gazetted to the command of the reserve battalion. On Boxing Day, 1846, the first battalion embarked at Gravesend on the freight ship "Herefordshire" and landed at Gibraltar after a rapid passage of nine days. It was joined by the reserve battalion early in 1847. Both battalions were on parade in 1849, when the Infanta of Spain, accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Montpensier, paid a visit to the Governor, the first time since the siege that a member of the royal family of Spain had visited Gibraltar. When the reserve battalion was disbanded in 1850 some of the men were allowed to volunteer for service on ships belonging to the Experimental Squadron under Commodore Martin.

TRYING EXPERIENCE IN BERMUDA.

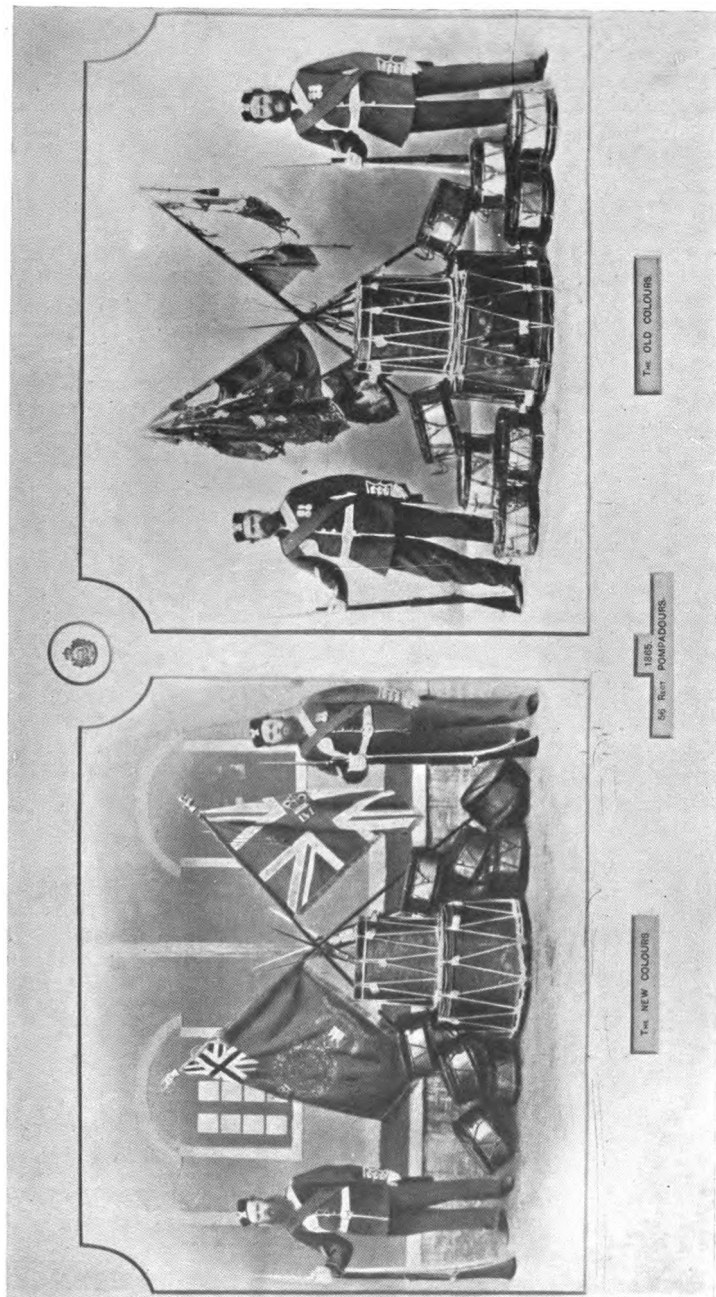
Bermuda was the next station, the change being made in 1851. The grenadier company was at Forts George and Cunningham, No. 1 at Fort Victoria, Nos. 2, 5 and the light infantry companies at Royal Barracks, Nos. 3, 6, 7 and 8 at Ireland Island, and No. 4 at Hamilton. A band programme has been preserved of the year following, dated at St. George's, in which six items are set down, viz., overture, Rossini's "Gazza Ladra"; Jullien's "Ravenswood," waltz; Benedict's "Crusaders"; Jullien's "La Figlia," quadrille; Donizetti's duet, "Betty," and Jullien's "Prima Donna," polka. The tour of service in the Island proved to be most trying, for yellow fever made its appearance and the epidemic was at its height from September, 1853, to the following November. The 56th had a strength of 1,005 N.C.O.'s and men in May, when Lieut.-Colonel Eden went on leave and handed over to Lieut.-Colonel Palmer, and in December following, when Lieut.-Colonel Eden returned, it had sunk to 783, so virulent was the outbreak. Out of officers of the 56th, fifteen were attacked and six died; of 1,005 N.C.O.'s and men, 335 were taken ill and 222 died; 30 women and 40 children were also affected, of whom 20 of the former and 12 of the latter succumbed. The acting Governor of the Colony, Colonel Philpotts, R.E., died on September 18th. Lieut.-Colonel Robe, R.A., assumed the command on that day, but on the 19th he, himself, was attacked, and Major Oakeley, 56th Regiment, the next senior officer, took control on the 20th. Before the close of that day he, in turn, was stricken and the only remaining field officer on the Island, Major Byles, 56th Regiment, succeeded, on September 22nd, to the command of the troops and the administration of the Colony. This officer's efforts to check the spread of the malady were commended by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. On October 11th Major Oakeley re-assumed duty and continued to administer affairs until November 20th, when Governor Elliott returned.

The fortitude and good conduct of the troops were the subject of special commendation by the Governor. To Major Oakeley, Sir Charles Elliott wrote: "In a condition of circumstances in which it has been absolutely necessary, and still continues to be so, for the safety of the force, to break it up into small detachments at considerable distances from each other and necessarily difficult of supervision, the maintenance of good discipline and soldierlike conduct must depend in a very high degree on the moral tone of the soldier himself. In a long and varied service in all parts of the world it has unhappily been my lot to witness several deplorable instances of general sickness and formidable mortality in the Queen's forces, and certainly the present occasion has powerfully strengthened my own impression of the confidence which may always be reposed in the conduct of the troops where they perceive themselves to be objects of that lively sympathy and well-considered care and arrangement of the officers in the

military and medical authority over them so eminently displayed in the present emergency." On December 20th, 1853, the Principal Medical Officer (Dr. Dennis) reported, "with feelings of the deepest gratitude to almighty God," that "the heavy and dreadful visitation" had ceased, and added: "In the calm which has succeeded to a turmoil so deep, it will be the duty of each and all to devote their energies to an earnest consideration, bearing however remotely upon it, with the view to avert the recurrence of so awful a calamity. Our last case of yellow fever occurred at Ireland Island on the 21st ultimo (November) and its subject has since been discharged to duty; the few cases now remaining under this head in our hospitals are all convalescent. Since its onset in the beginning of September, 297 men, 26 women and 21 children amongst the troops have become its victims and if to this list the convicts and inhabitants are added, the mortality will be found to be but little below 600 souls." The services of Major Oakeley and the officers under his command were noticed with approbation by the Queen. When the Regiment was just recovering from the effects of the visitation in October, it received an order to embark for the United Kingdom on relief by the 44th (1st Battalion The Essex Regiment), but trouble with Russia was then looming and the 44th were diverted to the Mediterranean instead.

IN THE CRIMEA, INDIA AND IRELAND.

A welcome change of scene came in January, 1855, when the Pompadours (Lieut.-Colonel S. Oakeley in command) landed at Cork and again occupied the Royal Barracks, Dublin. The transfer from the West Indies was made with a view to reinforcement of the Army in the Crimea and orders came for embarkation at Kingston, in the steam transport "Imperatrice," with a strength of 82 officers and 831 other ranks. A depot was established at Mullingar and a reserve depot at Malta of eight officers and 200 men. Balaklava was reached on August 25th. The Pompadours, with the 13th and 31st Regiments, formed the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division and were quickly put into the trenches before Sevastopol. The enemy resistance was lessening and the fall of the great fortress was imminent, the 56th being present when it was entered upon September 8th, from which fact they became entitled to bear "Sevastopol" upon their colours. Almost a year later—July 11th, 1856—they embarked for home and, landing at Cork, were sent to the Curragh, the depot being moved to Pembroke Dock. Home service was brief, for on August 14th, 1857, the Regiment left Kingstown for India, where the Indian Mutiny was causing grave anxiety. The depot was transferred to Colchester. Upon arrival in the East, the 56th, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel R. W. Lacey, were stationed at Belgaum, with detachments in towns in the adjacent country. When war with China broke out the Regiment was selected for service, but the order was subsequently countermanded. In 1860



From a Photograph at the Depot, Warley.

the headquarters were at Poona, with six companies at Ahmednagar and two at Sattara; Colaba was the station in November of the same year, with detachments at Poona and Surat. During the time the Regiment was quartered at Bombay (1861), the rifle shooting of the corps, under the instruction of Lieut. R. I. Thompson, had so improved that it was highly complimented thereupon by General Sir Hugh Rose, the commander-in-chief in India. In November a move was made to Surat, where the 56th had been stationed fifty-two years before, and from thence to Deesa in Gujerat. The fever and dysentery which had infected the unit at Colaba caused considerable mortality in 1862, but the conduct of the men was never better than during this trying time. Whilst there Lieut.-General Sir William Mansfield, commander-in-chief of the Bombay Army, expressed himself highly gratified with the state of the Regiment, yet another of the long list of compliments which high authority had paid it. It was in this year that workshops and a gymnasium were established, meeting with instant success. On November 16th, 1864, new colours were presented by Sir Charles van Straubenzee, K.C.B., who reminded the 56th that if its losses in action had been small, those from disease and climate had been great. Over 800 non-commissioned officers and men volunteered to remain in India when the 56th, less than 500 in strength, embarked for home, at the end of October, 1865, in the troopships "Tyburnia" and "Agamemnon." The journey was notable from the fact that the 44th were also returning at the same time in the "Dilawur." After rounding the Cape of Good Hope the two vessels met at St. Helena, where, time permitting owing to the water tanks having to be filled, a visit was paid to Napoleon's grave. Both regiments sailed into Portsmouth within six hours of each other after the long voyage. The 56th were met by over 200 recruits, so that the West Essex were nearly 700 strong when the unit was reduced to ten companies. Headquarters were in Portland in July, 1866, with companies at Weymouth, Marchwood and Tipner. The Duke of Cambridge inspected the Regiment on October 13th at Portland. In February, 1867, the 56th were ordered to Aldershot and attached to the 1st Brigade, whence a strong company was despatched on December 26th, under Captain R. I. Thompson, to Hampton Court to protect it from Fenian outrage. The detachment was shortly withdrawn on relief by a company of the 51st. The old colours were conveyed to Chelmsford, on January 11th, by Captain F. C. Hill and Lieut. T. D. Sullivan, and there deposited in the parish church, now the cathedral church of the See of Essex. The Regiment, with a strength of over 700, was removed to Ireland in the "Himalaya," in January, 1868, headquarters and three companies being at Waterford, with outlying companies at Clonmel, Carrick, Fethard, Cahir and Duncannon. In June, 1869, the West Essex were concentrated at the Royal Barracks, Dublin, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Patey.

The country was in a very disturbed state and there were several changes of station in 1870. Headquarters and four companies were transferred to Athlone in March, whilst two companies moved to Ballaghaderreen, in County Sligo. Later in the same month another two companies went to Sligo from Dublin and two to Boyle. Two of the Athlone companies were detached to Tuam, followed by the two remaining companies, one to Tuam and the other to Dunmore. Headquarters remained alone at Athlone until one of the detached companies reported at the end of the month. In October there was a change to the Curragh for headquarters and six companies and in the December following the detached companies rejoined from Sligo, Boyle and Ballaghaderreen, so that the Regiment was once more complete. The depot, with the 64th depot, was attached to the 56th Regiment when orders came to proceed from Cork to India early in February, 1871. The move was countermanded because of an outbreak of scarlatina in Cork, but the 56th were able to embark at Queenstown on February 28th in the "Serapis" for Alexandria, their strength being 32 officers and 898 other ranks. When off the coast of Tripoli on March 12th the troopship became disabled by the breaking of the main screw shaft and there was some anxiety until the "Crocodile" hove into view the next morning and towed the ship to Malta, which was not reached before the 16th. At that Island the Regiment was transhipped to the "Crocodile" and reached Alexandria, whence it crossed the Isthmus of Suez by rail during the night and re-embarked in the "Euphrates," arriving at Bombay on April 6th. The barracks in Ghoopoorie lines, Poona, were occupied; a change coming in January, 1874, to Karachi in relief of the 66th, with three companies detached to Hyderabad. It was at this station that intimation was received that the Castle and Key could be worn as a collar badge on the tunic and serge frock by non-commissioned officers and men of the Regiment, whilst velvet facings were permitted to be worn by the officers. The first regimental industrial exhibition was held in August, being most successfully organized by Quartermaster C. V. Leech. This was followed by the West Essex carrying off the Bombay Presidency prize of 200 rupees for the second successive year at the Poona exhibition for excellence of work executed in the regimental workshop. Great attention was paid to rifle shooting and in September, 1876, the Regiment swept the board at the Bombay Presidency meeting at Poona, a team of sixteen non-commissioned officers and men, under the Adjutant, Lieut. J. B. T. Newbury, securing 70 prizes of the approximate value of 1,372 rupees, including the "Poona" and "Deccan" cups, which the corps had won ever since the establishment of the meeting. An officer who joined upon appointment at Poona has recorded that the majority of the men were then in the prime of life and of very fine physique, the average service of the N.C.O.'s being eighteen years and that

of the privates ten years. Most of them wore beards and whiskers, the sergeant-major (Mann) having a square beard which reached well down his chest. The Hyderabad detachment was transhipped from Karachi to Bombay and then to Aden in January, 1877, but an outbreak of smallpox delayed the departure of the rest of the Regiment, who were leaving 244 other ranks in India, volunteers for other corps. The 56th were isolated at Jemedar-ka-Landi, about sixteen miles north-east of the Hyderabad road. In March four of the companies were despatched to Aden and then the headquarters and two other companies followed at the end of that month. Lieut.-Colonel G. F. Berry had succeeded to the command. The heat at Aden was intense and radiation from the black rocks was so great that it was difficult to find a cool place even after sundown, when a favourite amusement of the officers was to sit in the sea and smoke before turning in for the night. Early in 1878 the Regiment embarked for home. When within nine miles of Malta, on January 26th, a strong westerly gale set in and the "Serapis" made very poor headway. As little coal was left because of a head wind all the way from Alexandria, the engines were stopped and the vessel drifted some distance away from the Island. Upon the gale subsiding sails were set. A steamer was sighted, which promised to report, and then in the evening flashes and reports of guns were heard. They came from the warship "Raleigh." This vessel took the troopship in tow and Malta was reached on January 31st. The Regiment expressed the utmost appreciation of the manner in which Captain Davidson and his officers managed the ship during this uncomfortable time. The "Serapis" made Portsmouth on February 12th and the 56th, just over 500 officers and men, immediately took up quarters at Parkhurst, Isle of Wight.

LIFE AT PORTSMOUTH AND PORTLAND.

In April, 1878, Lieut.-Colonel F. C. Hill succeeded to the command and at the end of the month, owing to international tension over the Eastern question, the reserves were mobilized. Accordingly 276 non-commissioned officers and men of the East and West Essex Militia Reserve reported for duty, but on July 30th, the excitement having died down, these men were disbanded. "A" Company, under Captain Kelly, provided the Queen's guard at Cowes during the summer and Captain Lucas's company relieved them in the following November. In 1879 the 56th removed to Gosport, occupying Forts Grange and Rowner, part of the outlying defences of Portsmouth. The two forts were built upon a grassy plain about 1,000 yards apart. The rooms consisted of casemates, which were covered with a considerable depth of earth, forming a parapet with a command of nearly 80ft. They were each surrounded by a deep ditch, which in the case of Fort Rowner was filled with water. This fact was responsible for a sad occurrence whilst the Regiment was there. One of the men

quartered in Fort Grange broke out of barracks by crawling through a porthole and traversing the dry ditch. When returning, in his hurry, he mistook Fort Rowner for Fort Grange and, running into the ditch, he found himself in deep water. He swam across, but his further progress was barred by a high brick wall rising sheer out of the water. Whilst endeavouring to climb the wall, he became exhausted and sank, his body being recovered three days later. Recruiting was good and during the twelve months from September, 1878, 160 men joined the Regiment. In October, 1879, the 56th were again moved, this time to Portland. There a small pack of beagles was formed, of which Lieut. Stock was master. Excellent sport was obtained on the Downs, though the kills were not numerous, for when a hare was exhausted it would squat near a fresh hare, which quickly drew the attention of the pack. The chief duty was to provide guards at the prison. One of the Essex men had an exciting adventure with an escaped convict. He was proceeding to Verne Barracks when he saw the man coming rapidly down the road whirling a pickaxe round his head and threatening to brain anyone who touched him. The Essex soldier stepped aside and let him pass, but, having done so, he turned and gave chase. Being a good runner, he was easily able to come up to the runaway, whom he collared from behind and hurled to the ground. The pick flew out of the convict's hand and he was held down until warders arrived and took charge of him. Whilst at Portland, one of the officers had a horse named "The Duke," which he rode and drove in a dog cart, but the animal being uncomfortable in harness and of no use as a charger on parade, the owner determined to sell it. Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard purchased it for £80 and a month later, when he held a horse sale at Belhus, Aveley, Essex, the animal, then described as "The Prince (late the Duke)," was sold for £400. The great blizzard of January, 1881, affected Portland very severely. Snow fell to the depth of three feet and was blown by the gale into drifts from 15 feet to 20 feet deep. One of these extended along the whole front of the men's barrack rooms from the level of the barrack square to the roof of the casemates. The door of the officers' quarters had been left open and snow lay in the passage inside to the depth of 5ft. For over a week no cart of any kind could come up to Fort Verne, all food and stores having to be taken up the hillside by fatigue parties on a road cut through the snow. The tour of duty at Portland was notable inasmuch as the first draft was sent from Portsmouth in the "Jumna" to the newly-linked battalion, the 44th, in India. It consisted of three non-commissioned officers and 118 privates and was under the command of Captain Lefroy. The reputation for good shooting gained in India was maintained at the inter-regimental meeting in 1880, when the Pompadours won the first prize, with an average of 89.37 points per man. Commenting upon this performance,

the A.A.G. Musketry remarked, "The average made by the team of the 56th Regiment is not only the highest ever made in this match, but also the best average for a like number ever made in any match or competition whatever."

THE GREAT CHANGE.

Important administrative changes took place about this period. In August, 1871, the depot of the 56th, which had been attached to the 54th Regiment in Ireland, was transferred for few weeks to the 1/15th Regiment. On September 30th it embarked at Kingstown in the "Orontes" for England, to be stationed at Colchester, and was there attached to the 2/16th Regiment, pending, as the regimental records state, "the introduction of a scheme for more intimately connecting regiments of the line with the Militia of counties and permanently localizing their depots." In April, 1873, the connection with the county was made closer by the removal of the depot companies to Warley, where, with those of the 44th (East Essex) and the East and West Essex Militia, they joined the newly-formed 44th Sub-District. From that time forward recruits joined from the Warley depot; officers were on occasion seconded as adjutants of the two Militia battalions, and in the same capacities to the Volunteer battalions as from 1883. The change was preliminary to the great event of July 1st, 1881, when the 44th Regiment became 1st Battalion and the 56th the 2nd Battalion of The Essex Regiment. There was great feeling in the latter unit when it was ordered that the purple facings should be changed to white, as laid down for non-Royal line regiments. The use of the number and badge of the 56th on the appointments was gradually discontinued as they wore out and the title "The Essex Regiment" substituted, with the arms of the county and a badge combining the Sphinx and the Castle and Key. At this time, too, the Crimean colours were deposited at the Royal United Service Institution, but about 1887 they were finally removed to the Depot. Warley was designated the headquarters of the 44th Regimental District.

AT GIBRALTAR.

From Portland the Regiment was transferred to North Camp, Aldershot, in May, 1881, forming part of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, then commanded by the Duke of Connaught. Just before that Lieut. H. G. W. Ford left to take a company in the York and Lancaster Regiment. Two years later he went out with the latter Regiment to Suakim and was present at the battle of El Teb, where his company held the corner of the square which was broken by the charge of the dervishes. He was killed there, surrounded by about thirty of his men, who died with him. Whilst the Battalion was at Aldershot a detachment of the 4th Essex Militia joined for three weeks' training as from April 26th, 1882, under Captain F. S. Walker, and another party of the

3rd Essex, under Lieut. W. S. Wood, underwent similar instruction in June. The Pompadours had not been long at Aldershot before active steps were taken to recruit up to strength in anticipation of foreign service. Whereas at the end of 1881 there were 574 other ranks, by April 1st, 1882, there were 971. When the Battalion embarked in July, 1882, at Portsmouth, in the "Malabar" for passage to Gibraltar, recruits had joined so recently that not only were some of them not equipped, but others had not been clothed and went aboard wearing civilian attire, which was exchanged for military uniform on the troopship. With a small number who joined subsequently, the Battalion was up to establishment for the colonies, which was fixed at 24 officers and 865 other ranks, serving with headquarters and eight companies. Lieut.-Colonel Albert Greenland was in command. Upon embarkation for Malta, however, nearly two years later, there were 18 officers, two warrant officers and 924 other ranks on the strength. On arrival at Gibraltar various companies of the 56th were stationed at North Front, Town Range, Wellington Front and Europa Point. In December, 1883, there was a move to Bonavista Barracks, with three companies at Windmill Hill. There was much tobacco smuggling by the Spaniards. One of the favourite devices in the neutral territory was for the women to wind many pounds of tobacco round their legs and then to pass the Spanish sentry without challenge. On another occasion an Essex officer observed three or four Spaniards hauling in a fishing net, which, from their exertions, he judged to be extremely full of fish. When it was landed on the beach, however, he found it contained twenty or thirty casks, presumably of tobacco. An exciting incident of the short stay on the Rock was the rescue of the crew of a Norwegian ship, which was driven on shore on the Eastern Beach near the Devil's Tower. No rescue appliances were at hand and so 100 men of the Essex were collected and, by linking arms from the shore through the surf, made a line which reached the bowsprit. The crew were then persuaded to drop into the sea.

Whilst at Gibraltar the Battalion suffered heavy loss in the sudden death from syncope of its commanding officer, Lieut.-Colonel Greenland, on November 26th, 1883. His burial, on November 29th, at North Front Cemetery, was attended by the Governor (Sir John Adye) and the whole of the garrison, with the Battalion present as firing party. The remains were subsequently removed to Warley Cemetery, where a monument erected by the officers and men now marks the spot.

Sudden orders for Malta came in February, 1884, and as there was no troopship available, a gunboat was sent to commandeer the s.s. "Duke of Devonshire" as a transport. At Malta orders came for Alexandria, which was reached on March 1st, and from thence the Battalion proceeded to the Main Barracks, Abassiyeh, Cairo. Lieut.-Colonel W. R. White was in command. There was trouble with the Mahdi and the Essex were part of the reinforce-

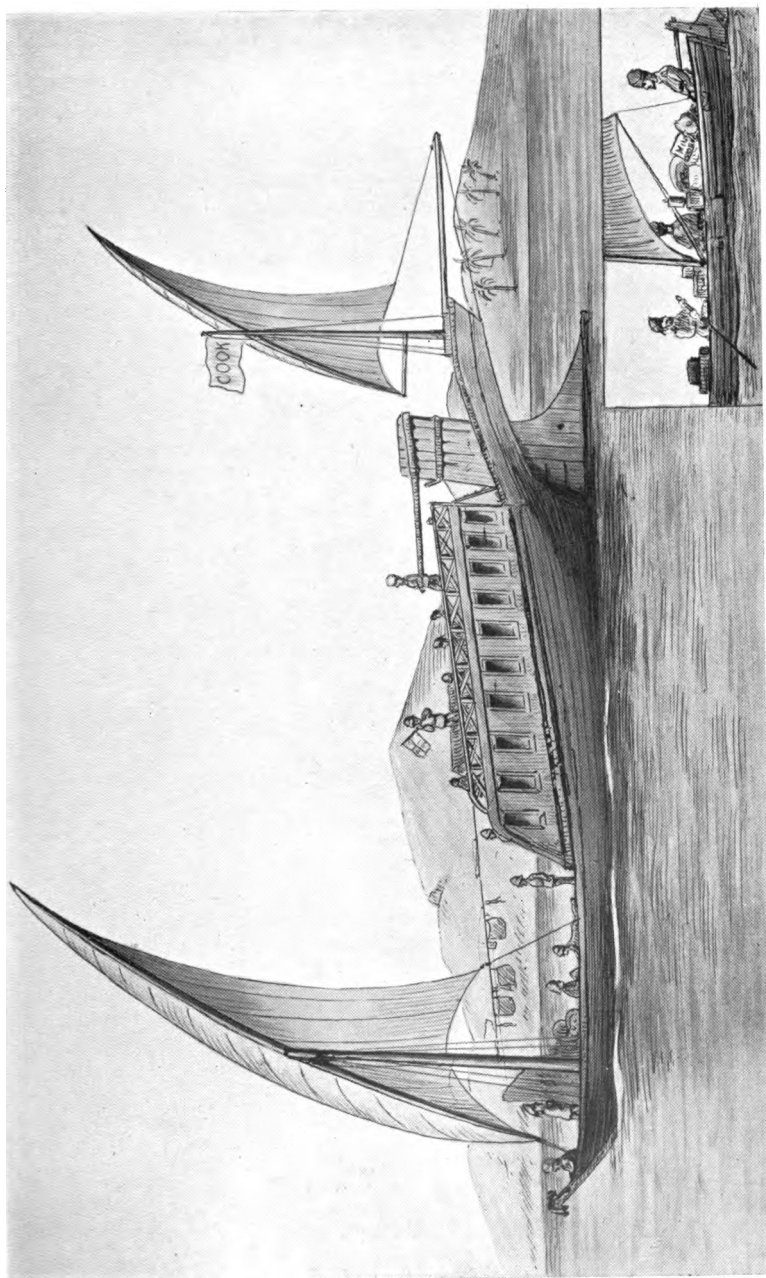
ment. Instruction of the newly-formed Camel Corps was actively proceeding near by the Barracks and, wrote an officer, "I was watching the men one evening being taught how to mount their chargers. About twenty camels were lying down in line and a soldier told off to each; the men had been told how to hold the bridle and were learning to mount in four motions. On the word 'One' each man placed his left foot in the stirrup and laid hold of the front part of the saddle, waiting for the word 'Two.' At this moment the camels had agreed among themselves that they had had enough instruction drill, so they all rose at once like a covey of partridges. The result of the manœuvre was most disastrous to their would-be riders, who were nearly all of them hanging suspended by the foot in the stirrup iron with their heads dragging on the sand. The confusion was terrible, as each man had to be assisted out of the stirrup separately and while this was being done some of the camels began to walk about with their riders head downwards. Eventually all the men were released from their unpleasant positions, but not before some of them had suffered considerably from abrasions." Whilst at Cairo Lieut. R. J. Tudway and 27 other ranks joined the Mounted Infantry for purposes of instruction. "The senior officers in the Battalion wore the Crimean medals," wrote Brig-General Anley, many years later in the "Regimental Gazette." when recalling this period of service with the 2nd Essex. "They represented an older and very different school of soldiering from that which now exists in the Army. The greatest attention was paid to the niceties of drill, and a good word of command was considered a more important military possession to a young officer than was a knowledge of tactics. The men were a stout, well-seasoned lot, excellently drilled, but they had not received the individual training which is the lot of the soldier of to-day. The Battalion on parade, nearly 1,200 strong, presented a fine sight. We were armed with the Martini-Henry rifle and the weapon was not looked on with much favour. It was very liable to jam in rapid fire owing to faulty extractor, and I can remember an order being issued that the supernumerary rank should, when the Battalion was in action, have cleaning rods in their hands, ready to remove the empty cartridges which had jammed in the men's rifles. Furthermore, the Martini-Henry bullets were not considered large enough to stop a charging Dervish, many instances having occurred of the Dervishes continuing to advance after being hit more than once. It is interesting to remember that in the South African War a certain number of the Boers were armed with the Martini-Henry rifle and that the wounds they gave were always looked on as most severe—worse by far than the wound from a Dum Dum bullet. This will show how much it took to stop a fanatical Dervish."

THE FALL OF KHARTOUM.

UP THE NILE WITH THE RIVER COLUMN.

The Pompadours formed part of the River Column, under the direction of Lord Wolseley, which vainly sought to relieve Khartoum in 1884-5 and rescue General Gordon from the Mahdists, who had over-run the Sudan. The destruction of Hicks Pasha's expedition in November, 1883, caused the Egyptian Government to decide upon evacuation, but the task of securing the withdrawal of the garrisons was seriously affected by the defeat of Baker Pasha's force in February, 1884, which was despatched for that purpose. A British contingent from Suakim, under General Graham, fought several actions with the Dervishes, under Osman Digna, in an endeavour to reach Tokar, only to discover on arrival that the place had already surrendered upon terms. The situation in the Sudan became critical and attention was concentrated upon the rescue of the Egyptian soldiers and civilians in and around Khartoum. The British Cabinet had despatched General Gordon in January, 1884, to report upon the best means of securing the removal of the garrisons, a mission which was enlarged, when he arrived in Cairo, by the Khedive's appointment of him as Governor-General of the Sudan. Whatever was expected of Gordon, it is clear that he made desperate efforts to establish peaceful conditions in the Sudan and that nearly 3,000 people were evacuated to Assuan. Towards the end of May, 1884, however, the Dervishes captured Berber and cut communication with the outer world. The investment became closer and in October the isolation of Omdurman was achieved. Its surrender on January 15th, 1885, hastened the end and on January 26th, at dawn, Khartoum was taken by assault. Gordon was killed. Two days later the vanguard of the River Column, under Colonel Sir C. Wilson, arrived in sight of the city, only to note with consternation that the Egyptian flag had ceased to fly from the Government House. Then spread the news of the tragedy which has since become part of British history. After heavy fighting in the vicinity of Suakim, the evacuation of the Sudan was persisted in. It was not until the Autumn of 1898 that British and Egyptian troops, under Lord Kitchener, re-entered Khartoum and occupied the Sudan, but upon that occasion no Essex battalion was present with the force.

Public agitation flamed white-hot as the Mahdi's followers gradually closed in on Khartoum. In July, 1884, the Government decided to effect Gordon's relief. Delay ensued and September had arrived before Lord Wolseley was instructed to leave England and advance upon Khartoum by way of the



Methods of Transport up the Nile.
Drawn by F. W. Whistock from a sketch by Colonel C. H. Culwin, C.B., D.S.O.

Nile. On September 9th the British General was in Cairo and preparations were at once made for concentrating a force of 5,000 fighting men at or near Shendy by the end of the year, with sufficient supplies also for the garrison and inhabitants of Khartoum, whom it was intended to evacuate. By October Lord Wolseley was ready to advance and the 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel W. R. White, which had reached Assuan on August 15th, was ordered to form part of the River Column, the intention being, in addition to cavalry, camelry and artillery, to transport 550 men each of seven infantry battalions to Shendy. Beside the Essex they were 1st Royal Irish, 1st Royal Sussex, Black Watch, Camerons, 1st Royal West Kents and 1st Gordons. The journey to Wady Halfa was made by dahabeeyah and then by train to Gemai, at the head of the Second Cataract. From Gemai to Korti—past the Third Cataract—the voyage up the Nile was made by whalers, manned by Canadian voyageurs or Kroomen, and, despite the heat, short rations and cholera, the whole of the infantry was at Korti by the last week in January. The Royal Sussex were first moved from Dongola to Korti and they were followed by the 1st South Staffords, who arrived on December 17th, being the first infantry to accomplish the journey from Gemai by whaler. A company of the 2nd Essex was the next to embark (November 11th), making Korti on December 30th. Two further companies followed on November 14th, one company and the headquarters on November 20th, one company on the 21st and the last two companies on the 22nd, but it was not until January 10th that the Battalion was concentrated at Korti. “The men were models of strength and pictures of health,” wrote an officer. “Brown, sinewy and muscular, veterans of a hundred cataracts, they sat at the oars or tramped the shore with the tow line with all the ease and freedom of a perfect knowledge of their work. They had adapted themselves to one of the strangest tasks ever asked of British soldiers.” Whilst the main body of infantry were being passed through the Cataracts, Sir Herbert Stewart, with cavalry and camelry and a detachment of the Royal Sussex Regiment and other details, known as the Desert Column, made their celebrated march from Korti to Metemmeh, from which point it was hoped to open up water communication with Gordon. “Their departure was a sight not soon forgotten,” recalled Brig.-General Anley. “The long lines of camels trooping slowly into the desert, the evening sun behind them, the lone sand hills and distant heights of the Bayuda Desert in their front. Bronzed and burnt by the sun, these soldiers, the pick and flower of the Army, looked as hard as the service on which they were bound. Over the line of march, the dust hung, a cloud of gold above the moving troops; then the sun went down behind the river and darkness, coming quickly in the East, blotted out the Desert Column.” They fought two severe actions

on the way, at Abu Klea (Jan. 17th) and El Gabut (Jan. 19th), in which Sir Herbert Stewart was mortally wounded. The former is possessed of some historic note because a charge by the Dervishes temporarily broke the British square. A mounted infantry detachment of the 2nd Essex, under Lieut. Tudway, accompanied the Desert Column and gained credit during the withdrawal for the skilful manner in which they conducted the rearguard action. Private C. Wilford was killed in that encounter. Another detachment (Captain Carter) was also near the scene of action. It moved out of Korti on January 8th, on camels, to garrison El Howeyat wells in relief of mounted infantry which had joined the Desert Column. Two companies of the Essex were also posted for a time at the fort of Abu Dom, Merowi, under Major (now Major-General) Ventris, in relief of a detachment of mounted infantry. The action of Kirbekan, on February 9th, when a force under Major-General Earle (who was killed) captured a Mahdist position, constituted the last serious fighting of an arduous and anxious campaign, with a disappointing close.

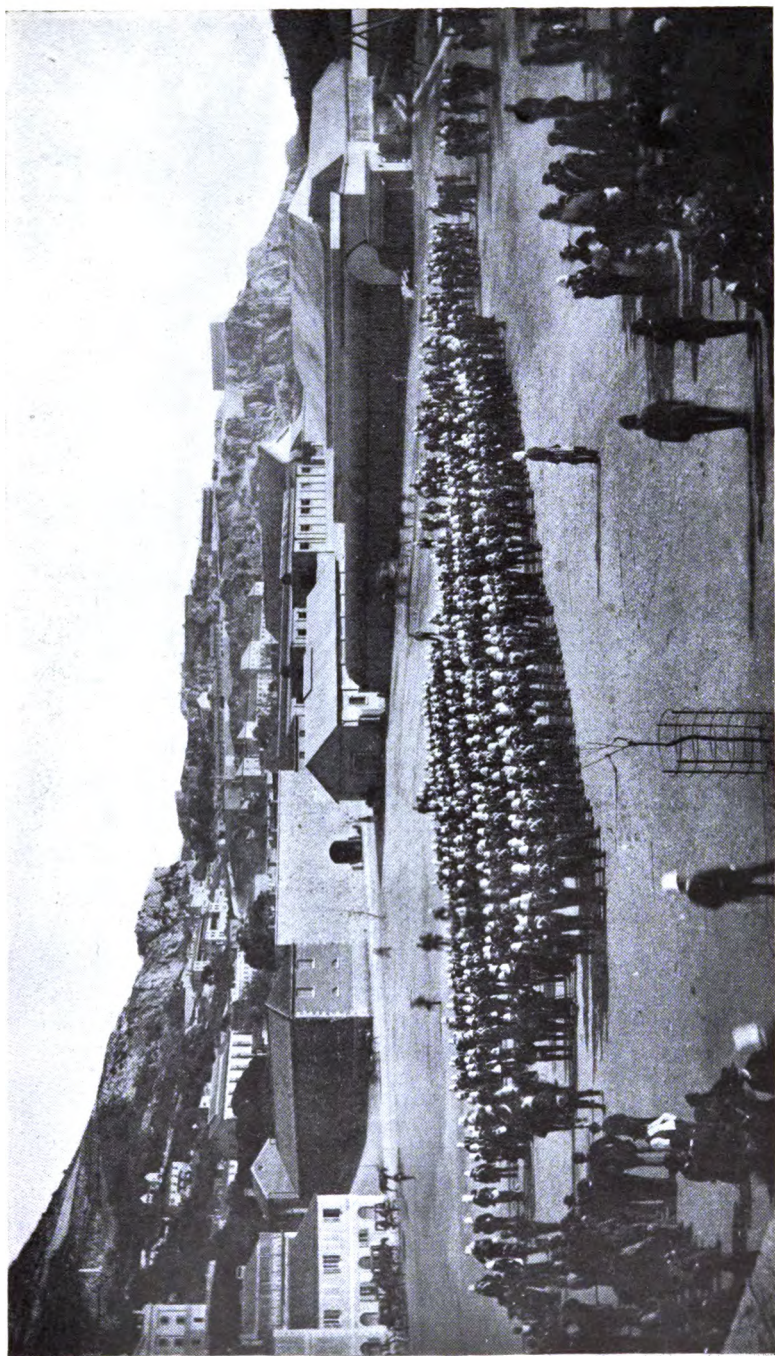
INCIDENTS OF THE JOURNEY.

The voyage up and down the Nile was full of incident and in the diary of Lieutenant C. H. Colvin, of the 3rd Essex (now Colonel C. H. Colvin, C.B., D.S.O.), who was attached to the 2nd Essex, there is a graphic description of the labour and danger involved in negotiating the Cataracts. He left Cairo on September 17th with an infantry draft for Assiut, embarking on a steamer, towing two barges, on September 20th, and arriving at Assuan eight days later. The Battalion, less 200 men, left for Shellal on October 29th by train, where it remained for some days. A detachment of 120 proceeded with the Guards' Camel Corps to Wady Halfa on the 30th and on November 5th "D" Company (Capt. Cruickshank), to which Lieut. Colvin was posted, embarked on a rat-infested dahabeeyah, making Wady Halfa on the 15th and Gemai on the 17th, where, ten days later, Lieut. Colvin, with part of his company, boarded a whaler, which leaked badly before the day was out. From this point onward the diary tells the story :

November 28th.—Arrived at Sarras at 11 a.m. ; received orders to pitch camp and go on fatigue, carrying stores to Semneh.

29th.—Left Sarras in charge of four boats with rations for 5,000 men for one day at 10.45 a.m. ; fine breeze. Ran against rock below cataract at 12.30 p.m., stove in plank below water line and started seam ; shifted cargo ; got brown paper and white lead with covering of tin over the hole and caulked the seam ; got off again at 2 p.m. ; pulled through all the gates except the last and encamped for the night.

30th.—Started at 7 a.m. ; men let go tracking line of one boat ; saved her by getting sail on and just ran her in shore ;



Embarkation of 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt. for Egypt. Gibraltar, 1884.

arrived Semneh at 8.45 a.m. and reported myself. Discharged cargo and returned at 11 a.m., reaching Sarras at 12.45 a.m.; whole journey lasted 26 hours.

December 1st.—Cruickshank and Baker, R.N., started with five boats for Semneh and left me to bring on three as soon as repaired; got off at 3.30 with a very light breeze; arrived at foot of cataract at 5.30 p.m.; found C. had pulled his boats through. Encamped for night, sleeping on boat with guard.

2nd.—C. came down with his men to haul through the gate; accomplished by 8 a.m.; got through remaining gates by 3 p.m.; arrived at Semneh at 3.45 p.m. Boats discharged all their cargo above thwarts and were hauled over a cataract with about 3ft. fall. Encamped for night at Semneh. Canadian body washed ashore in morning, being the second which had been seen. (The cataract of Semneh extends for two miles and has two gates, the lower one being unimportant. The upper gate is difficult. Here the mountains come right down to the bank on either side and the channel between them is interrupted by a great barrier of rocks, quite 200 yards wide, across the river).

3rd.—Left Semneh at 7 a.m.; very light breeze; with sailing, rowing and tracking did about eight miles; very hard work; brought up at 4.30 p.m.; three boats got adrift while tracking, but were brought in to backwater without accident; part of the bank was of rock 40ft. high.

4th.—Got under way at 6.30 a.m. after breakfast and tracked through three cataracts; then sailed and rowed to foot of cataract at Ambugol (? Ambako), last boat arriving at 2 p.m.; had lunch, then hauled boats through first small gate and encamped.

5th.—Got off at 7 a.m. and rowed across to opposite bank through very rough water and hauled boats through cataract; arrived at portage at 4.30 p.m., unloaded and encamped.

6th.—Hauled the boats up the remaining rapids, arriving at Ambugol (? Ambako) at 10 a.m.; had breakfast; repaired boats; got off again at 4.30 p.m. and went about quarter of a mile; found H Company, who had been fifteen days on the journey, encamped. (The river approach to Ambako is intersected with islands and patches of rocks, though the cataract is not a difficult one to negotiate).

7th.—Started at daylight; had long bit of rowing; very hot; wind ahead; hauled through long cataract and encamped at 4.30.

8th.—Got off at 6 a.m. and arrived at foot of cataract at 12.30 p.m.; waited for a company of the 46th to get their boats through; got all our boats through by 2.30 p.m.; had fine breeze and reached foot of big cataract at Tanjour at 3.30 p.m.; had to encamp, as there were too many boats in front waiting to go through. (The cataract of Tanjour is, next to the upper gate of Semneh, the most difficult one between Abkeh and

Hannek ; it extends for about three miles and there are two gates to be passed, where the water within narrow straight channels runs at tremendous speed).

9th.—Got our boats through all but the last gate ; were delayed by company of another regiment, who took a very long time ; a boat of the Egyptian convoy was upset and drowned three men ; all the boxes of food came flying down the cataract.

10th.—Got all our boats through by 10 a.m. and with a fine breeze sailed as far as Akasheh ; my boat, leading, stopped for a rest ; all came in, except one, which had a plank torn out.

11th.—Boat through cataract and had a line ready for the others ; boats of another regiment went ashore and ours slipped past them and over the cataract ; fine breeze ; reached Dal at 2.45 p.m., having done the quickest passage from Sarras-Dal yet made, ten days (Akasheh cataract is easy, for, though there are several islands, the river is wide).

12th.—Unloaded boats ready for portage and sent off four with crews of eight men up the cataract ; we found there our headquarters and F Companies, they having been twenty days on the passage up.

13th.—Remaining boats sent over cataract ; have to wait our turn for portage of stores, which is done by Egyptian soldiers, donkeys, camels and natives. Hear that we are to do a convoy from Hannek to Kaibar.

14th.—Sent two boatloads with donkeys at 8 a.m. ; sent rest with camels, etc., at 11.30 a.m. ; walked over ; found one of my kit-bags opened and mosquito net gone. Reloaded ; had a nasty little place, about 2ft. drop ; one boat after being hauled over charged into another and smashed the rudder ; camped for night and sent for new rudder. (The cataract of Dal is not difficult ; it is about four miles long, the river channel being 1,500 yards broad and interrupted by small islands, ridges of rocks and isolated rocks, which produce rapids).

15th.—Sent two men in with rudder to Dal first thing, while we took boats on to Sarkamatto, where we shipped fifteen days' rations ; the rudder arrived 12 noon and after a little fitting we got off at 2 p.m., with nice breeze ; kept right bank till close to flat-topped hill, then crossed and camped at 5.30 p.m.

16th.—Started at 7.15 with light breeze, which freshened. River full of rocks which can easily be avoided ; in some places considerable rush of water requiring strong breeze. One boat smashed another rudder, which caused an hour's delay ; camped at 5 p.m. (The cataract of Amara is formed by an interrupted ridge of rocks running across the river channel.)

17th.—Started at 7.30 a.m. with a strong breeze, current running very quickly ; got to a large island and took the eastern



Negotiating a Nile Cataract

Drawn by F. W. Whisstock from a sketch by Colonel C. H. Colvin, C.B., D.S.O.

course, as a mud bank barred the other route ; had an attack of ague ; passed Sai island at 3 p.m. ; stopped at Abudieh at 4.30 p.m. and camped, having to wait for the rear boats.

18th.—Started at 7.30 a.m. ; very light wind. Passed Sauarda at 9.45 ; kept close to right bank, then tracked and pulled as far as Soleb, where we stopped at 5 p.m., the last boat arriving after dark.

19th.—Started at 7.15 a.m. ; no wind till 9 a.m. ; several sandbanks made navigation difficult ; crossed the river a little below Koyeh ; wind very light ; seventh boat arrived to say No. 494 had a hole in her two miles back ; unloaded a boat and put two crews and tool box in her and sent her off to rescue ; in the meanwhile pitched tents ; they returned at 6.30 p.m., having mended the boat.

20th.—Started at 8 a.m., the two boats left behind having come up early. Light breeze till 10 a.m., when it died away ; had to pull nearly all the way to Absarat, where we arrived at 3.30 p.m. ; got ration of inferior lime juice and left a man in hospital ; camped about a mile away from Absarat.

21st.—Started at 7.30. Good going and light breeze till 10 a.m., when lot of rocks across the river formed a rapid ; all got well over except No. 494, which had her rudder damaged ; waited till it was repaired and delayed about an hour ; breeze freshened after this. Several mud banks were run upon ; step of a mast carried away and it had to be repaired ; passed the light division of the Camel Corps ; encamped about three miles north of Kaibar.

22nd.—Started at 7.15 ; light breeze ; got to Kaibar at 8.30 ; crossed to left bank, where course was given to Hannek. About thirty boats waiting to go through the Cataract and had to pay 3s. per boat to natives to help. Got all our boats through safely by 3.30 p.m. ; light breeze ; did about five miles and camped at 5.50 ; bought some chickens and eggs. (The Cataract of Kaibar is formed of a low ridge of rocks across the river, which is 1,200 yards wide hereabouts).

23rd.—Left at 7.30 ; passed " B " Company, who had a boat smashed and got safely through a very nasty rapid ; camped at 5.45 p.m.

24th.—Got away at 7.15 ; arrived at Shaban rapid at 12 noon and got my boat through by pulling and sailing ; the other boats had to track ; all clear by 4.30 p.m.

25th.—Got off at 7.30. No wind ; crossed the river ; very heavy current—10-11 knots. Took the western channel, which turned out a fraud ; had nothing but rapids to haul over ; only did about three miles. Poor sort of Christmas Day.

26th.—Started tracking about 9.30 ; breeze got up ; passed over a very bad rapid and arrived at Hannek at 1.30 ; lunched with the Commandant, who gave us some bread, and

started again with one pilot to every three boats. I went first and found a boat stuck on a rock in the middle of a rapid ; hauled him off with a line by means of a good lot of pulling when other boats were tracking. Got my boat through Cataract up to Abu Fatmeh by 5 p.m. ; one other boat arrived of ours. Had to sleep on boat and had no dinner, as everything was on the boat in the cataract. (The Hannek Cataract extends for three or four miles and the channel is broken by islands and rocks. There is only one gate of any importance. It was the last cataract before Korti was reached and the 2nd Essex had so far travelled in whalers over 212 miles, of which over 22 were through broken water, caused by cataracts).

27th.—Drew four days' rations ; hustled by everybody to go on. Remaining boats arrived at 2 p.m. ; got off again at 3.30 p.m. and in a strong wind did about five miles.

28th.—Got off at 7.40 ; about fifteen other boats in sight ; strong breeze ; good going ; did about 28 miles ; stopped at 5 p.m.

29th.—Started at 7.15 ; nice breeze ; passed Dongola at 11 a.m. ; signalled the station ; wind dropped at 2 p.m. ; stopped at 5 p.m.

30th.—Dead calm ; had hard work pulling and tracking ; stopped at 5 p.m.

31st.—Started at 7 ; light air just helping us along, which increased in the afternoon. Naval Brigade passed us in light boats as we were pulling up.

January 1st, 1885.—Started at 7.30 ; no wind at all. Pulled and tracked all day and at Khandak (? Kodokal) found the river a mass of sand banks ; all got aground ; had to cross to the west bank to encamp.

3rd.—Started 7.15. Light breeze, which died away at 10 and sprang up again at 12.30 ; got as far as Old Dongola at 2 and stopped at Hameer.

4th.—Started at 7. Got to Deblieh at 3.30. Heard that the 79th had had a skirmish with the rebels at Korosko and 19 men killed (afterwards found to be a false report). Took three days' rations, which were found to be short ; biscuit all dust ; were hustled on and stopped about quarter of a mile from Deblieh.

5th.—Started at 7 ; about 26 boats all tracking and pulling ; got hard aground on sandbank and everybody had to get out and move her off ; stopped at 4.30 for remaining boats.

6th.—Dead calm ; very hot ; sand flies fearful ; did about ten miles, very sickening work.

7th.—Reached Colonel and several other boats ; dead calm ; some very bad tracking ; stream very strong ; awfully hot ; air black with flies ; did about 11 miles.

The company reached Korti at 8 p.m. on January 8th and the boats unloaded. Hardly had the men settled down when orders came for a trip with rations to Merowi, a distance of 70 miles there

and back, which occupied over two days. Major Ventris was in command. Outpost duty followed, with a heavy sandstorm as accompaniment. On January 21st the Sheikh of Kordofan came in and made peace, but what was equally important to the 2nd Essex mess was the purchase of sixty pots of jam for £8. Two companies were moved up the river to garrison Abu Hamed. The Battalion was impatient to move on, but there was little prospect of an advance. On January 22nd came news of the battle of Abu Klea, which caused some gunners and a detachment of the 38th to leave the next day for Metemmeh. A sergeant and twenty men volunteered for the mounted infantry and left for Shendy with one hundred men of the Royal Sussex. Some of the officers had the luxury of claret and green peas for dinner on the 26th and the day after news came of the Desert Column and the Battle of Gabut, together with the information that Sir Charles Wilson and some of the Royal Sussex had left for Khartoum in Gordon's steamers. Troops marched across the desert to Shendy towards the end of the month and the monotony of waiting was relieved for Lieut. Colvin in an expedition to find the battlefields of Korti; he failed to do so, but discovered five gazelle and got within sixty yards of a buck. The fall of Khartoum was unofficially known in the camp on February 6th, though it was not officially notified until the next day. Rumours spread of an advance by the Mahdi in force, but nothing transpired. Lord Wolseley inspected the Battalion on February 15th, the men being clad in grey serge coats and blue serge trousers. In March the 2nd Essex went into garrison at Tani, on the east bank of the Nile, and it was there, on the 31st of the month, that the brigade (38th, 50th and 56th) were warned to be ready at a moment's notice, there being a report that the enemy were near to Ambukol. At this station the men made huts for their accommodation of sun-dried bricks, with the wood of palm trees for rafters and grass matting for roofs. The uniform had by this time become much the worse for wear, particularly the trousers, and it was no uncommon thing for the men to be seen walking about with garments made of sugar bags, upon which was imprinted in block letters, "Nile Boat Stores." One officer was fortunate enough to receive a spear-head from Metemmeh from Colonel Buller (Sir Redvers Buller), whilst he bought for £2 one of Gordon's medals, made of pewter with a proportion of silver in it. The temperature rapidly rose and at one time there was neither soap, sugar, tobacco nor salt in the commissariat. Fifty umbrellas were issued to protect orderlies and others when on duty. The officers endeavoured to escape from the sun by using a big cave on the river bank as a summer house. Near by were the remains of a petrified forest, and a section of a petrified tree was utilized as a whist table. As a relief to the tedium and the heat, the entries in Lieut. Colvin's diary poked satirical fun at the conditions. Thus :—

April 12th.—Thermometer 150 degrees in the shade. Buttons on coat got red-hot and burnt holes in the cloth.

April 13th.—Great sand hurricane. Tent blown in air and carried over the river. Commissariat stores blown away; nothing to eat; Nile dried up; thermometer 5,000 in the shade; don't mind now; am acclimatized.

April 17th.—Paper mail arrived, so scorched by sun as to be unreadable; blood in body boiling; bloody steam issuing from pores of skin; must find a method of allaying same; no means of registering the heat to-day; estimated at a million in the shade.

On May 21st Lieut. Colvin's boat won the regimental boat race for the Essex and five days later came the certainty of withdrawal, for orders were issued for the 2nd Essex to return to Egypt. The next day (May 27th) the ordnance stores were burnt and the rockets fired and then on the 28th came the embarkation in boats, 50th leading, then the 38th and the 56th, with the Naval Brigade as rearguard. Immediately the troops were afloat the natives set most of the straw huts on fire and so the boats went downstream in a blaze of flame. Wady Halfa was reached on June 11th, where the Pompadours "wished the Sudan and its inhabitants a very good-bye." At Luxor buff accoutrements and helmets were ordered to be again pipeclayed and beards to be shaved. During the campaign the Battalion lost 85 men through enteric fever and had the method of inoculation against the disease then been known probably the majority of those attacked would have survived. Five men were also lost by drowning during the passage of the cataracts.

THE BOAT ORGANIZATION.

Colonel F. J. Brown, C.B., then serving as a captain with the Battalion, also kept a most interesting diary of his experiences. His Company ("G"), 70 of all ranks, embarked at Gemai in nine whalers, with a Canadian voyageur in each, and at Sarras took on board 100 days' rations for 72 men, 550 cases in all, which had to be landed at Korti intact. In addition, 15 days' rations were drawn to be consumed *en route*, so that each boat carried about 70 cases as well as arms, ammunition, kits, bedding, cooking pots and wood for fuel. The stores completely covered the bottom of the boat and were piled up a foot above the gunwale. Careful instructions were issued for the voyage, together with a Nile Boat Song, composed by Colonel (Sir William) Butler, consisting of seven verses, which reminded the men,

Nile stream is rolling strong,

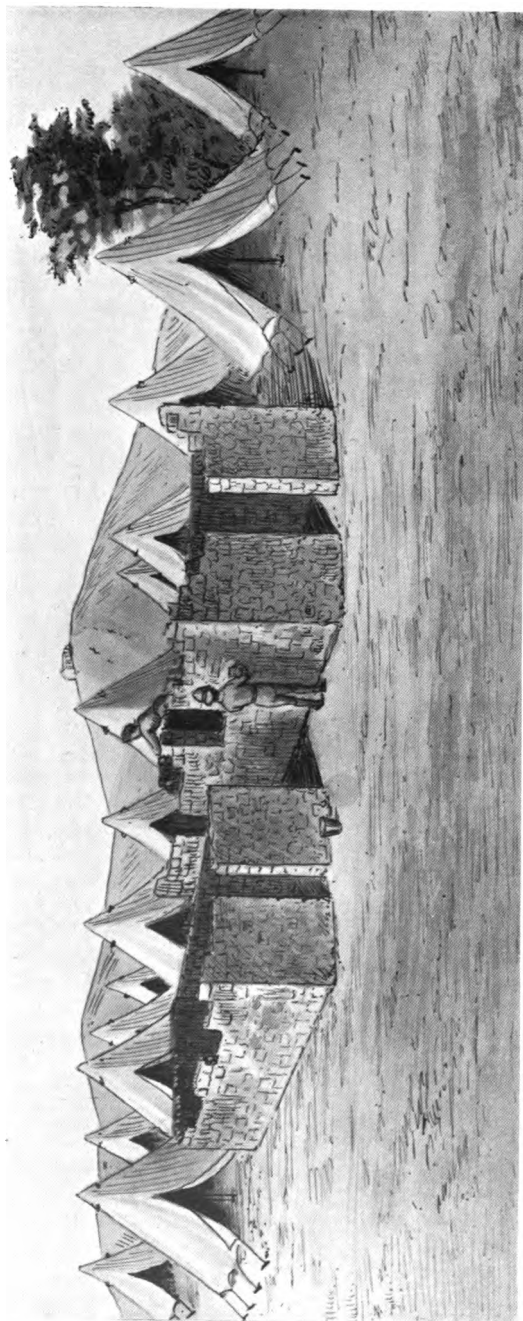
Nile road is rough and long,

Bend to the oar, men.

Sun's rays are hot o'erhead,

Deserts around us spread,

Toil on the shore, men.



Building Huts of Sun Dried Bricks at Tani.
Drawn by F. W. Whistock from a sketch by Colonel C. H. Colvin, C.B., D.S.O.

Temples and tombs of Kings,
Relics of bygone things,
Wake to our drum, men.
So may those ruins vast,
Catching our bugle's blast,
Tell him we come, men.

A start was made on November 24th, 1884, and Korti was reached on January 9th, 1885. The work was extremely arduous, the chief trouble being due to damage to boats by collision with rocks, and which had to be roughly repaired before the voyage could proceed. Colonel Brown's notes afford most interesting information concerning the routine employed in this novel expedition. The guard at night was composed of one N.C.O. and six men, mounted half an hour after camp was pitched—one sentry was a flying sentry over the camp and another was posted on the edge of the river over the boats. A N.C.O. or man was detailed to each of the boats at night, chiefly to do baling, or otherwise there was grave risk of sinking before dawn. Upon camp being pitched orders were drawn up for the following day, including the hour at which it would be struck, the breakfast hour, the time at which the company would start and the alarm post for the night in case of attack. A hot breakfast was always served and a hot meal at night, whilst during the day bully beef and biscuit were issued on the boats when sailing or, if rowing or tracking, half an hour's rest was allowed for a cold meal ashore. No watches were carried, so the N.C.O. of the guard had instructions to tell the sentry that as soon as he saw the morning star rising the bugler was to be called to sound the "Reveille," when all tents were struck, rolled up and placed in boats, whilst fires were lit and water boiled for breakfast. Whenever difficult water was encountered and the boats had to be hauled, all arms and boxes of ammunition were taken out and carried to the reshipping point. At night each man took out his rifle and waistbelt. The former was always strapped to the tentpole, the waist belt and two ammunition pouches, containing 20 rounds, being hung over the rifles. The men seldom undressed at nights, but always took off their boots. When hauling round corners where there was very rapid water it was usually necessary to send one or two men on the detached rocks off the point to clear the rope and for this purpose the best swimmers of the company were selected, viz., Lance-Corporal Johnston, Privates Oliff, Durkin and Adamson. All the boats belonging to the company had strict orders to keep together during the voyage and, except upon three occasions, they reported at camp each night. The side of the river upon which camp would be pitched was always fixed, so that late arrivals knew on which bank to find it. When tracking or rowing the boats generally managed to keep closed up, but when sailing some of them were much faster than others and on mornings when there was a breeze the N.C.O.'s

were told before the start that at 4.30 p.m., or when the sun appeared about a foot above the horizon, the leading boat of the company would choose a camping place and stop, so that the slower boats might close up before dark. This order caused great competition for the first place, as the men always liked to cook their evening meal and eat it before darkness came on. The company's tents were pitched in two rows, if space permitted, the officers' tent in front and the guard tent either in rear or on the flank. The alarm post was generally between the officers' tent and the first row of company's tents. The boats were as far as possible equally laden, but owing to their build some drew several more inches than others. At portages the cases of each boat were kept separate and carried by the crew, whilst at long portages each N.C.O. marked the cases with the boats' numbers, so that they could be easily identified. Whilst dinner was being cooked the men washed themselves. Their clothes were generally washed and dried when under sail. Fresh bread was requisitioned at river stations whether a ration of biscuit had been previously drawn or no, and the ration of rum was always used. The voyageurs were left at Dal and Captain Brown afterwards steered his own boat, an example which was followed by the N.C.O.'s. The Canadian boatmen varied in quality, some being first-rate, whilst others were indifferent and with little experience. They all thought the Nile cataracts would be child's play for them, but later admitted the navigation of them taxed their energy and resources. These men were of considerable use in noting from the appearance of the water where the dangerous rocks were. The soldiers also quickly became adept after suffering shipwreck a few times. As soon as a boat reported a leak it was unloaded at the nearest convenient spot, generally a shelving sand-bank. It was hauled up high and dry upon the rollers and then turned bottom upwards. The hole was rubbed and scraped and by the aid of a mallet, knife or turn-screw, the portion of the plank which had been broken in was prised back and kept in place by a piece of wood wedged tightly between the ribs on the inside and nailed thereto. This made the break fairly watertight. Boiling pitch and oil were mixed and a portion of canvas soaked therein, whilst a piece of tin was also prepared to fit three planks, one on each side of that which was damaged. When the break was fairly dry boiling pitch was applied and the canvas stretched over the hole, care being taken to keep it flat. Over this material the sheet tin was placed and secured by copper nails at inch intervals, the edge of the tin also being smeared with pitch to make it watertight. A repair to one boat entailed more drastic treatment. It collided with another whaler, which struck her on the port side, about 28ft. from the rudder, breaking through the gunwale and nine planks down to below the water line. The sternpost was moved two inches and water rushed in by the bucketful. A

lashing was first made with a piece of light towing line. One end of the latter was placed round the centre thwart and the other round the top of the sternpost. With the aid of a stout stake, the lashing was twisted tight and so gradually drew the sternpost back into its place. The stake was then secured. By boring a hole through the plank immediately below the gunwale on each side of the stern and attaching a similar lashing or marline, the gunwale was also drawn into its place and secured to the sternpost with nails. From the plank supplied to each boat for repairs strips of wood were cut the width of the damaged planks and nailed on the outside, whilst pieces of wood, tightly wedged between the ribs, were fitted on the inside. On both sides a thick coating of pitch was then applied. When launched the boat did not leak very much, but a member of the crew had to be constantly baling during the day, whilst three times during the night the water had to be taken out to prevent the craft from settling down. Casualties from disease enabled Captain Brown to do without this boat when he reached Dal and it was accordingly handed over to the boat officer at that point.

For services in the Nile campaign Major F. Ventriss was promoted brevet-lieut.-colonel and Captains W. G. Carter and H. S. Fleming brevet-majors. Lieut. J. F. M. Prinsep was awarded the Royal Humane Society's medal for gallantly leaping into a rapid and rescuing a drowning soldier of the Battalion; he also received a clasp from the same Society for saving the life of a Sudanese sailor. Private J. Oliffe was also handed the bronze medal and Privates A. Brace and E. Morris the testimonial for life-saving.

THE RETURN.

The Battalion returned by easy stages to Cairo and occupied the Gymnasium Barracks on June 29th. On November 3rd Captain Cruickshank's Company was moved to Assiut, and on December 4th the Battalion followed. It embarked in two steamers and three barges and moved slowly up the river, being moored every night to the river bank. At Assuan huts were occupied on the Tagooq heights, with "E" Company at Shellal and "F" and "G" Companies at the foot of the hills by the river. After six days there, headquarters and right half battalion sailed down the Nile to Korosko and were quartered in mud huts. The alarm passed and the right half battalion rejoined the left half at Tagooq, Assuan. The voyage took from January 17th to the 23rd, 1886, for the dahabeeyahs were dragged by a little steam launch, which broke down and the vessels drifted along the main current of the Nile. Whilst at Assuan the 2nd Essex received their medals for the Nile campaign and notification that "Nile, 1884-85" was to be added to colours and appointments. In May Cook's vessels were boarded for Assiut. The river was at its lowest, being at places only a few feet wide and meandering between the sandbanks, upon which crops of melons were being

raised. Ras-el-Tin Barracks, Alexandria, were occupied, with one company on detachment at the Ravelin, close to the Rosetta Gate. Recreation was found in sailing in the harbour and hunting for antiquities on the site of ancient Alexandria. Privates Dangerfield, Douglas and Peterkin saved the life of an officer of the "Orion," when he was upset in a boat outside the harbour breakwater. Connection with the county was strengthened by the gift of £50 for the benefit of the N.C.O.'s and men from the Colchester and Essex Ladies' Association, being balance of the fund inaugurated to supply underclothing, pipes and tobacco for the troops whilst engaged in the Nile campaign. After a year's stay the Essex embarked on H.M.T. "Tamar" without a single drunken man, and landed at Malta on March 3rd. They were quartered on the east side of Grand Harbour, where Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Spencer succeeded Colonel W. R. White in command, the latter having retired with the honorary rank of Major-General. Two earthquake shocks were experienced in July, the volcanoes Etna, Stromboli and Vesuvius being in eruption at the time. At the end of 1887 the Battalion moved into Floriana Barracks. At the garrison rifle meeting that year the Battalion won the Pembroke Cup for the best team and Col.-Sergeant Sullivan was the champion shot. Another change came in September, 1889, when headquarters and four companies were sent to Cyprus, where they were quartered at Polymedia Camp, whilst the remaining four companies were accommodated at Fort St. Angelo, Malta, whence in 1891 they went to Fort Chambray, Gozo, where the men were able to watch the salvage of H.M.S. "Sultan," which had been wrecked in the narrow channel between Comino and Malta. The men at Cyprus were employed in road construction at Troodos, five of the new thoroughfares being named respectively Warley Road, Pompadour Road, Essex Road, Spencer's Walk and the 56th Extension. Early in 1892 the four companies picked up headquarters in Cyprus, the reunited Battalion sailing in the "Himalaya" for Bombay, where it landed on October 23rd, 1892. Orders were received for Shahjehanpur, in the North-West Provinces, scene of one of the outbreaks in the Indian Mutiny. After the camp of exercise in 1893 at Bareilly, headquarters and half the Battalion were sent to Chaubattia, a station in Kumaon Hills.

IN THE CANTONMENTS OF SHAHJEHANPUR.

In his reminiscences of this period of service, Colonel F. J. Brown, then a major in the Essex, has written a vivid description of life in Shahjehanpur, in the course of which he states: "To tackle the snakes in my garden I procured an iron carpet stretcher with 13 points, which I had mounted on a long wooden shaft. This weapon always stood in the verandah and when I saw a snake in the garden I sent the gardener to fetch the spear. One morning I saw a large male cobra, about 5ft. long, lying on some

leaves in the masonry of our quail pit, so I sent for the spear and pegged him down to the ground, the prongs entering near the reptile's neck. The brute hissed loudly and made a sort of rattling noise as well. It was so strong that it took considerable force to hold the snake down while the gardener hit it over the head, killing it. The kraits were small snakes about 12 inches long, but more deadly than a cobra. One never knew where to look for them. Sometimes they would get into one's boots; at others they would coil themselves round the leg of a table or bedstead and a very favourite place for them was to lie stretched out on the sill of one of the French windows leading into the garden. They are good climbers and can easily mount a flight of stairs. Our bungalows during the hot weather were infested by musk rats and scorpions. The smell of the rats was so overpoweringly strong that if a dog tried to tackle one he dropped it at once and foamed at the mouth. As the animals let off their smell when frightened, the great object was to get them out of the house with as little disturbance as possible. . . . In the hot weather and during the rains a certain number of mad dogs invaded cantonments. These were identified by the animals eating the mud in the roads. As soon as one was seen, the alarm was given and we turned out with guns and killed the dog before it was able to do any damage. The scorpions were black in colour and of large size. They came into the houses after flies and other insects and used to hide themselves in most unexpected places, so that before pulling on one's boots or slippers it was advisable to tap them on the ground in case any unwelcome strangers were inside."

A LUCKNOW HAILSTORM.

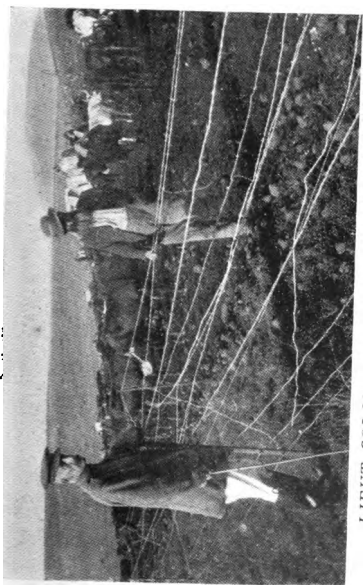
Lieut.-Colonel T. Prickett succeeded Colonel Almeric G. Spencer in September, 1891, in command, and Lieut.-Colonel D. A. Blest followed Colonel Prickett in May, 1895, the latter having been appointed A.A.G., Oudh District. Lieut. G. H. M. Stirling, Sergeants C. Adcock and W. Nash, Corporal F. Saker and Lance-Corporal C. Hare served with the Chitral Relief Force, for which they subsequently received the medal and clasp. In March, 1896, the Indian city had the unusual experience of a fall of snow. The temperature in the houses at 11 a.m. was 110°, when loud thunder was heard and inky black clouds were seen approaching from the direction of the Himalayas. When the storm burst hailstones fell of enormous size, covering a tract several miles long and about a mile wide to the depth of nearly six inches. Leaves were stripped off the trees and birds were killed. When the hailstones rolled off the roof of one bungalow they formed a heap nearly 5ft. in height, which had not thawed 24 hours later. The temperature suddenly dropped many degrees and there was snowballing. The natives could not understand what the hailstones were, never having seen anything like them before. The awful experiences of an Indian famine also touched

the Lucknow Garrison. "During the summer of 1896 a severe famine raged in the North-West Provinces and the Government provided relief works for the destitute natives. The grain-sellers in Lucknow kept up their prices and, as a consequence, several grain riots took place. The famine-stricken people wandered about the country in the most emaciated condition and on more than one occasion individuals arrived in the cantonments by road from Cawnpore and, making their way into some officers' compound, lay down and succumbed. One day in the Autumn I was one of a shooting party and we were having lunch under a tope of trees when we saw a native, a mere skeleton in appearance, grubbing up some dead leaves from the ground and eating them. We went over to him and gave him a whole loaf of bread, but such are the prejudices of caste, although he was slowly dying of hunger, he would not eat it because a European had touched it." That same year (1896) the 2nd Essex ran into the final of the Infantry Polo Tournament at Lucknow and were only beaten after a hard struggle by the Durham Light Infantry. They, however, won the Commander-in-Chief's Cup at the Central Rifle Meeting.

LIFE IN BURMAH.

Late in 1897 the Battalion was transferred to Shwebo, Burmah, with four companies on detachment at Bhamo. At the latter station the forest came up to the fort on one side and it was possible, lying in bed at night, to hear the leopards coughing as they wandered in search of prey. Upon another occasion a company was being exercised in skirmishing order through a patch of jungle grass, when a full-grown leopard jumped up among the men and bounded away into the adjoining forest. The crows, too, were daring, even coming into the quarters and wrenching the candles from the candlesticks and taking them to the floor, where they pecked them to pieces. One officer endeavoured to stop this marauding by putting the candles in a drawer when he went out, and the crows, in revenge, scattered a small bowl of studs, some of which were found in the barrack square. This was too exasperating to be endured and so a shoot was organized, in which 150 crows fell victims and a dead bird was hung outside each window as a warning. The survivors became so wary that they would not again come within gunshot. At Shwebo thamin shooting was popular among the officers. This stag is peculiar to Burmah, being about the size of a donkey and having fine antlers. A detachment was for a time on duty at Bernardmyo, close to the ruby mines. Each officer was careful to peg out a claim and dig for rubies, but with no success. Lieut.-Colonel T. Stock succeeded Colonel Blest in command whilst the Battalion was in Upper Burmah (1899). The 2nd Essex were due to complete their tour of foreign service during the trooping season of 1899-1900, but the South African War broke out and the Battalion was detained in India to replace another which had been sent to South Africa.

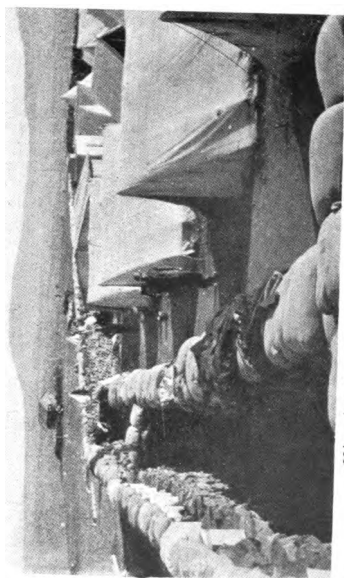
SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN, 1902.



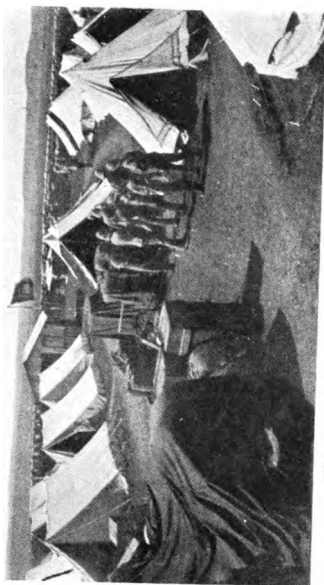
LIEUT.-COLONEL T. STOCK selects Cattle for Rations.



MAJOR CARTER AND YOUNG BOTHA.



View interior Fort Pompadour, looking south.



View interior Fort Pompadour, looking north.

Photos. by Major M. Chauver.

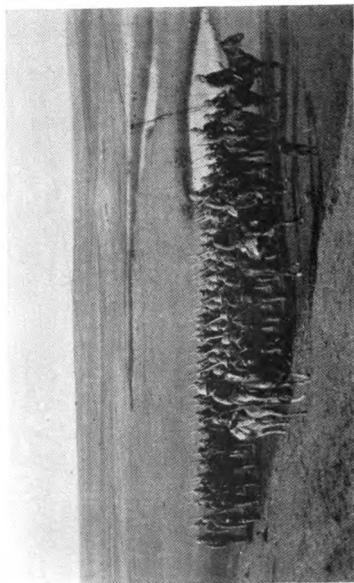
SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN, 1902.



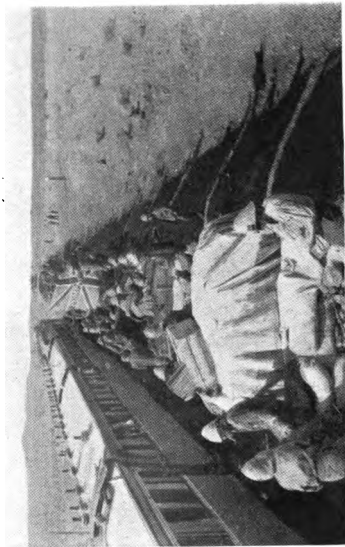
Blockhouse Swiss Cottage.



Testing Rockets.



Last Company to leave Blockhouse Line.



*Pompadours en route for home.
Photos. by Major M. Chawner.*

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

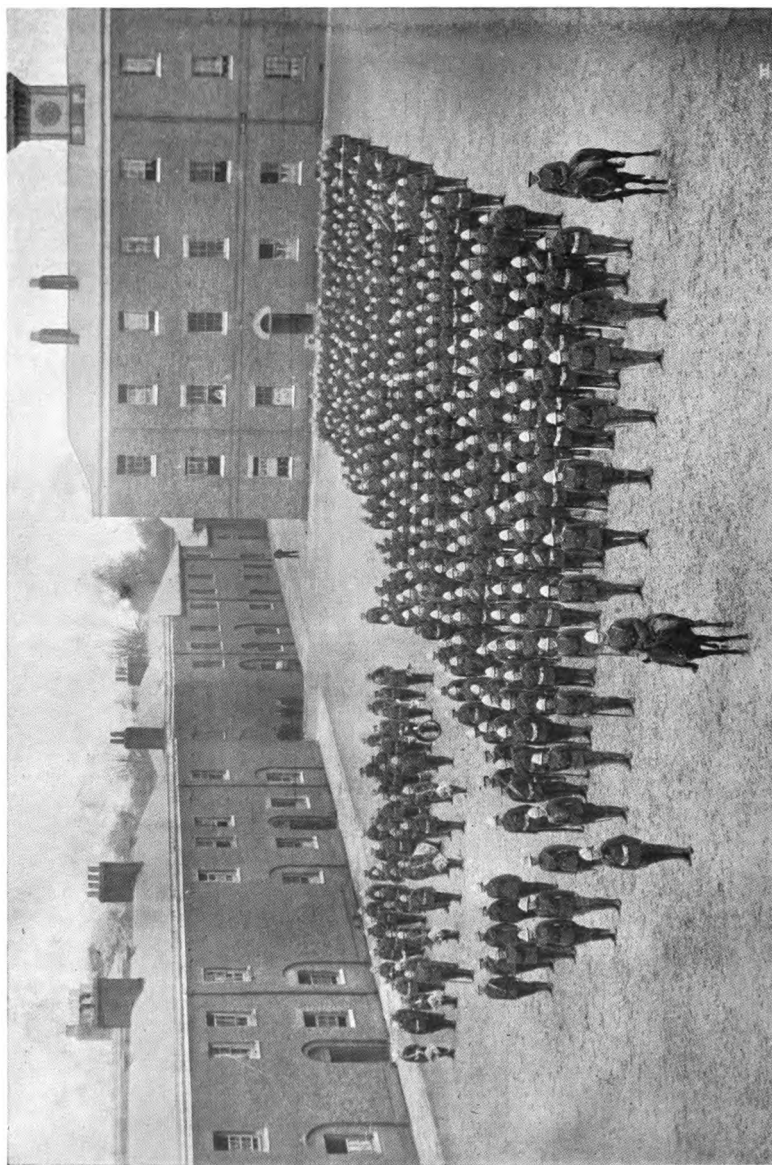
In January, 1900, the Battalion supplied a company (102) for the Burma Mounted Infantry, other companies being furnished by the West Ridings and the Durham Light Infantry, with Major D. T. Cruickshank, Essex Regiment, in command. Other officers from the Essex were : Captain H. C. Copeman, Lieut. C. W. Barlow and Lieut. G. H. M. Stirling. Mounted upon 12.2 Burmese ponies, the men presented a grotesque appearance. Alas ! few of these game weight-carrying ponies survived the rigours of the climate and those only as pets in the remount depots. The Burma Mounted Infantry joined Lord Roberts' army in March, 1900, and took part in the advance on Bloemfontein and Pretoria. At the reverse of Sanna's Post it covered the retirement, Major Cruickshank being severely wounded. During this action Lieut. G. H. M. Stirling (Lieut.-Colonel Sir G. Stirling) made a most gallant effort to bring away a gun. The two horses he took out were shot as he was attaching them to the trail. For this service he received the D.S.O., though personally recommended by Lord Roberts for the V.C. Another detachment served with this unit of Mounted Infantry, the officers being Captain H. C. S. Heath, Lieut. A. C. Halahan and Lieut. C. J. B. Daubeney. Early in March, 1901, the Battalion, with the detachment which had served at Thayetmyo, was transferred to Amballa, where later in the year it was on guard duty at a Boer prisoners' camp.

In the closing stages of the war the Pompadours were sent to South Africa. When they received orders in November the arduous work of preparation was intensified by the signing-on of 268 men, who took the bounty of £26 10s. to complete twelve years' service. The Battalion was welcomed on arrival at Bombay by Major-General Ventris, commanding there. With a total strength of 790, they landed from the "Armenian" at Durban, on December 23rd, 1901, and immediately entrained for Heilbron, which town they reached on Boxing Day. By way of Korn Spruit, Frankfort and Dundas Post they marched to Tafel Kop, in the north-eastern corner of Orange River Colony, where they built a line of blockhouses towards Vrede, doing so by short stages under cover of mounted troops. The men were complimented on their work by Brig.-General E. O. Hamilton. "Fort Pompadour," near Newcastle, was completed on January 31st, 1902. Life on the blockhouse line was by no means monotonous, for there were constant cattle drives and the Boers made frequent efforts to break through. Whilst out getting wood near Rishton Post, Privates Walsh and Smith were mortally wounded and a couple of officers who went out to look for one of them were held up by a party and disarmed whilst conveying him back to a blockhouse ; three men were also made prisoners a day or two later, stripped and sent across the Vaal to Standerton. The blockhouses near Rishton were heavily fired upon on the morning of February

14th. Again, on February 19th, Corporal Bowgett's blockhouse and Corporal Bloomfield's blockhouse were severely attacked and a large number of horses and cattle stampeded through the wire. Both blockhouse garrisons stoutly returned the fusillade, and the roofs and loopholes of their posts were riddled with bullets. One man was slightly wounded and nearly one hundred dead, wounded and living animals were collected next morning. Soon after two other blockhouses were attacked and again animals were sent through the wire fence, nearly forty having to be rounded up the next morning. Five men were slightly wounded. The blockhouse garrisons were complimented by General Hamilton on their spirited resistance. There was another alarm on February 24th, when the Boers broke through again, but at the cost of casualties, including one Boer killed. Officers and men left to join the Burmah Mounted Infantry in exchange for those who had returned to duty with the Battalion. There were minor crossings early in March. De Wet was reported to be intending to break through, but the threat did not fructify. The blockhouse line was strengthened by the construction of intermediate posts. Another effort to pass was made on March 6th, but the wagon that crossed was captured by a post, the party with it decamping in the darkness. Corporal Tobias was shot through the heart in a blockhouse trench, whilst there were also deaths from enteric fever. A party of fifty Boers went through on March 11, also leaving a trail of dead and wounded animals, rifles and ammunition. The next night another strong attempt was made from two directions, but the blockhouses beat them off and the raid failed. The line was made stronger by the construction of further posts and by the arrival of more troops, and successive determined attempts by the Boers were repulsed on the nights of March 24th and 25th. Until the armistice came at the end of May there were several efforts to pierce the wire cordon, but in almost every case without success. During the closing weeks the command of the Battalion devolved upon Major W. G. Carter, Lieut.-Colonel Stock proceeding to England to take charge of the 44th Regimental District. Early in June Major Copeman, Lance-Sergeant Wash, Corporal Bignell, and Privates Banner, Flinn, Flitton, Hayling, Sullivan, Stubbings, Groom and Green left at an hour's notice in a mule wagon for Heilbron *en route* for England to represent the Battalion at the coronation of King Edward VII. On June 11th Commandant Louis Botha, jun., with three field cornets, lunched with the officers and 3,000 rations were distributed to destitute Boers. The Battalion marched to Heilbron in the early days of July, the system of sending ox wagons forward the night before and carrying the tents and bedding on mule wagons working admirably.

IN ESSEX.

On July 21st, 1902, Lieut.-Colonel F. J. Brown, who had served throughout the war with the 1st Battalion, assumed the



2nd Essex on Parade at Warley upon return from the South African War.

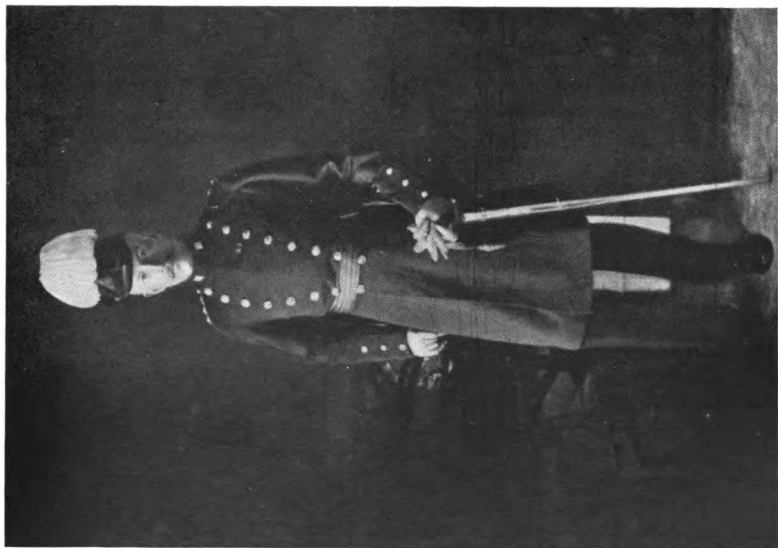
command at Heilbron. In October the Battalion reached home, having during its 147 years of service spent 96 years abroad and 51 at home, of which only 19 years were served in England. It was stationed at Warley, the second time that the 56th had been quartered in Essex since it was raised. The officers and men were warmly welcomed. The Mayor of Chelmsford entertained 600 officers and men in January, 1903, and officers of the Battalion were invited to Colchester Oyster Feast, when the Lord Lieutenant (the Earl of Warwick) made complimentary reference to the work of the Essex Regiment during the South African War. Another incident of the year was encampment in Regents Park for duty in connection with the visit of President Loubet, which was repeated on the occasion of the welcome to the King and Queen of Italy in November. In September the 2nd Essex made a successful recruiting march through the county, visiting Chelmsford, Witham, Danbury, Maldon, Tiptree, Wivenhoe, Colchester, Marks Tey, Braintree, Dunmow, Ongar and back to Warley, the behaviour of the men throughout having been splendid. The Pompadours in 1904 were again ordered abroad, this time to Lower St. Elmo Barracks, Malta, whence a year later the Battalion moved to Intarfa Barracks. Whilst there the Duke of Connaught arrived on the cruiser "Essex" and a guard of honour was formed by the Battalion under Captain F. G. Winter.

During this foreign tour both battalions were abroad, for the 1st Essex were stationed in India. Recruits, upon completing their training at the Depot, were, therefore, sent to a provisional battalion at Dover pending embarkation during the trooping season. This provisional battalion had a permanent staff and each regiment having both battalions abroad had two companies of recruits with it. It was the forerunner of the four company battalion system, as the unit was organized in double companies commanded by majors. Thanks to the initiative of Colonel (later Major-General) Ross, its interior economy as regards messing and allied concerns was probably better than that of any other battalion in the Army. The excellent system thus introduced subsequently led to improved conditions in the Essex Regiment, as officers who had served with Colonel Ross were eager to apply the knowledge they had gained.

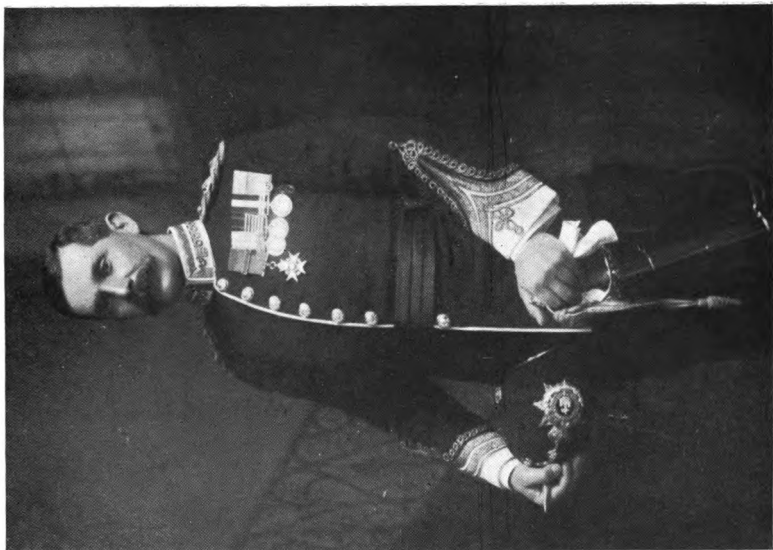
AT THE CURRAGH.

On leaving Malta in March, 1907, the 2nd Essex were sent to Richmond Barracks, Dublin. Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Tudway had taken over command in the previous July. Though the Essex were quartered in the capital, the headquarters and three other battalions of the 14th Brigade were at the Curragh. For the next three years, therefore, the Battalion left Dublin in May and was under canvas at the Curragh for training until October. The inclement Irish weather and discomfort of sleeping nine in a bell tent for nearly six months in the year made conditions

very trying for the rank and file. The camp was frequently a sea of mud. Among other annoyances were the Curragh sheep, which came at night and cropped the grass under the tent ropes. One officer who never slept soundly used to keep a mallet handy to strike at any suspicious bulge in the walls of the tent. Rumour had it that subalterns would creep up and tear the grass round the tent, to be rewarded by hearing the inmate bark like a dog to drive away the sheep! The only variation in the exchange between Dublin and the Curragh was a short stay at Belfast in August, 1907, consequent upon strike disturbances, for which the thanks of the Lord Mayor were received. Whilst in Ireland the tactical efficiency of the Battalion was very much improved. Colonel Tudway had spent practically all his previous service in Egypt and was a thorough outdoor soldier, which was a great advantage, for, except for musketry, the battalions of the 14th Brigade seldom got a week in camp without being employed in some training operation. The divisional commander was Major-General (later Lord) Plumer, who was constantly organizing flying columns in addition to battalion, brigade and divisional training. At this period majors had to pass a practical examination to show their fitness for command. With that thoroughness which General Plumer subsequently victoriously demonstrated in war, he arranged weekly field days for majors to give them practice in handling small forces composed of all arms. Many majors, prior to this change, had to undergo their examination without any practical experience whatever. About this time another innovation was made. Companies were sent off to fend for themselves for a short period, usually three or four days. The company commander was allotted a certain sum from the training grant and the cash value of the rations. Out of this fund he had to pay for food and the cost of occupation of camp sites, making all his own arrangements therefor. The object was to train the company commander to be self-reliant and to teach young soldiers to make themselves comfortable under all conditions. As often happens, there were departures from the idea and the admirable objects in view sometimes became side issues. Companies were pitted against each other and battle practice ousted training in camp and march discipline. Certain generals looked upon these marches as trials of administrative ability, the acid test being the amount of the bill. This attitude of mind had the effect of causing some officers to keep the cost low by putting their hands into their pockets, whilst others cut down expenses by reducing the extras over and above the actual rations. One general, report ran, was delighted at finding a company with a couple of live sheep, said to have been bought on the march for future consumption, for he was not aware that the contractor supplying the meat had lent the sheep for show purposes, to be returned on completion of the march. Nevertheless, the new system of training was justified by the increased military



COLONEL T. STOCK
who commanded 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt. in South Africa, 1902.



COLONEL F. J. BROWN, C.B.,
who commanded 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt. from 1902-1906



BRIG.-GENERAL J. R. CARLETON, D.S.O.,
who commanded 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt. from 1910-1913.



BRIG.-GENERAL R. J. TUDWAY,
who commanded the 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt from 1906-1910.

capacity of the troops. The commander of the Brigade was that gallant soldier, Brig.-General A. W. Thorneycroft, C.B. He was progressive in many ways, providing the cost of field telephones and other equipment out of his own pocket. Among other things, his foreign service had taught him the importance of troops being able to improvise methods of crossing rivers. Pontoons made of a few planks lashed on tarpaulins stuffed with hay or straw were found sufficiently buoyant to take even the 18-pounder field guns across the Liffey. Wickerwork boats, kin to the prehistoric coracle, covered with tarpaulins, were utilized to ferry parties of from ten to twenty infantry. This practice so interested the staff that the Essex specialized in crossing rivers and the men used to sing "There's one more river to cross." Much of this knowledge has been forgotten, but it was of great value in encouraging initiative and ingenuity and it is possible to imagine situations in which the training might be of inestimable advantage. Attention was also paid to organizing brigade and battalion scouts; to become Battalion scout officer was looked upon as a "plum." Expert observers and map-readers and tireless cyclists, these scouts would scour the country for miles, remaining out days at a time, indifferent to food or weather. As an example, one of the exercises was based on the fact that a wagon laden with lead to represent a heavy load of arms had left Trim with an escort of cyclists for Monaghan. The 15th Brigade scouts at Belfast were informed that a load of arms had been landed near Dublin and were being conveyed north, some indication of direction also being given. Within twelve hours the Belfast scouts had established a wide cordon across the country eighty miles from their base and had ascertained the whereabouts of the wagon, but failed to find its hiding place, though more by hard luck than want of skill. Travelling at night by highways and concealed in barns by day, the wagon got through, but the incident indicates the high standard of training that was expected. From about 1905 onwards there was also an improvement in the physique and intelligence of recruits to the 2nd Essex and the same was true of the whole Army. The advance secured upon the pre-South African War training compared with that which culminated in the Expeditionary Force of 1914 was due mainly to the provision of a training grant, which enabled commanders to carry out exercises without being tied to the comparatively small areas of Government ground.

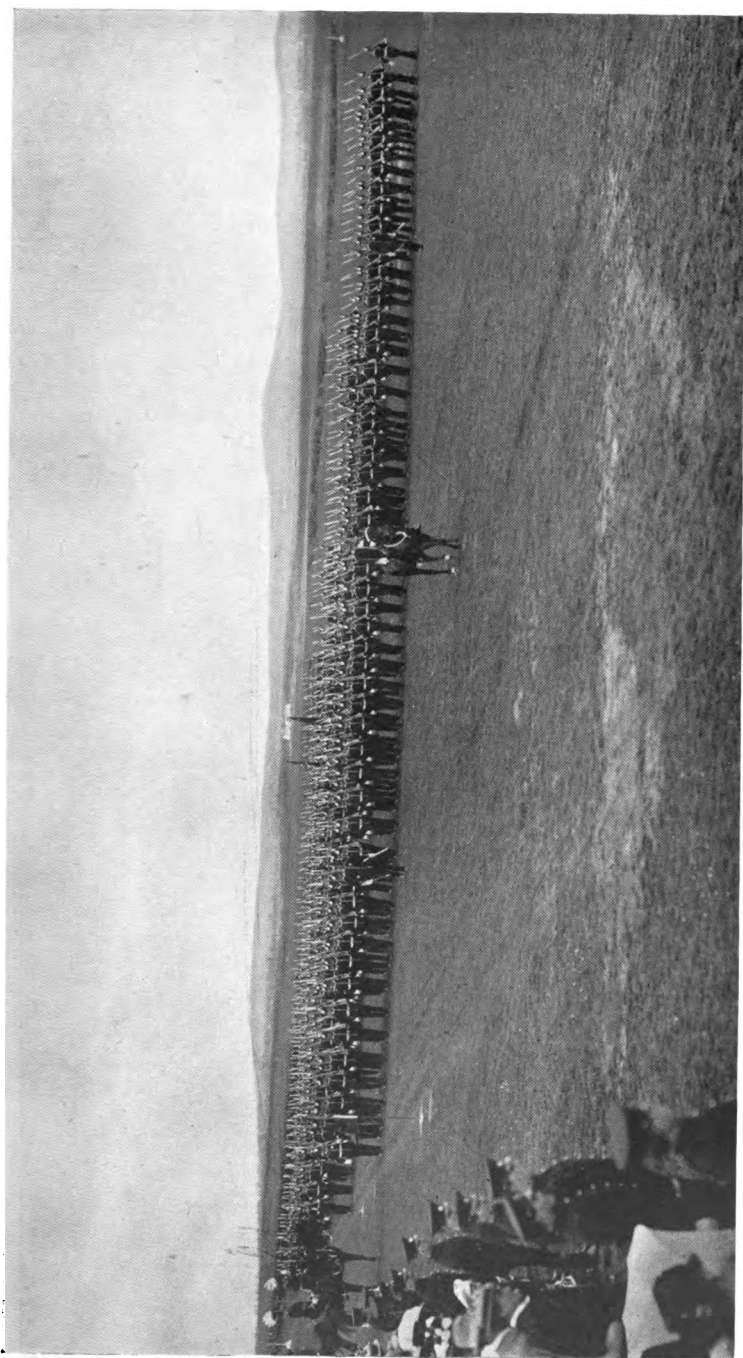
BEFORE THE WAR.

In 1910 Colonel Tudway was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel (Brig.-General) L. R. Carleton and the Battalion was removed first from Dublin to the Curragh, where it served two years, and then to Bordon Camp, Hampshire. Whilst at the latter station the four company system was introduced, the existing companies

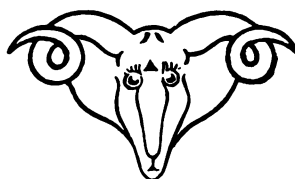
being affiliated in pairs. At first the double companies were known as "W," "X," "Y" and "Z," so as to avoid possible offence to Company *esprit de corps*, but within a year they became "A," "B," "C" and "D" Companies, though the 1st Battalion continued to use the last four letters of the alphabet. In October, 1918, the 2nd Essex removed to Chatham, where Lieut.-Colonel F. Gore Anley took over command. Before Colonel Carleton handed over to his successor to become Commandant of the Royal Military College, Kingston, Canada, he was present at a pleasing function which knit the regular battalions of the Regiment more closely to Essex. As the result of public subscription, organized by a committee of which Colonel R. B. Colvin, C.B., was Chairman, Mr. C. W. Parker, Treasurer, and Mr. J. O. Thompson, Honorary Secretary, eight silver drums were purchased at a cost of £400, four each being presented to the 1st and 2nd Battalions. On Saturday, October 25th, 1918, at the Recreation Ground, Chelmsford, the drums were handed over by the Lord Lieutenant (Earl of Warwick) to Major-General F. Ventris, C.B., Colonel of the Regiment. The 1st Battalion, then in India, was represented by Captain A. Sinclair Thomson and the 2nd by Colonel L. R. Carleton, D.S.O., with a detachment of 100 of all ranks. The occasion was rendered the more memorable by a speech from Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, who recalled his association with the 1st Battalion in the terrible sufferings endured in the trenches before Sevastopol in the Crimean War.

The conditions at Chatham were not so favourable for training as many other stations, as little ground was available for the purpose, but Major-General Snow, commanding the 4th Division, complimented the Battalion on its efforts to maintain the high standard which had been reached. When at Chatham the summons came, in 1914, for mobilization, as a result of which the Battalion was in action in France ere August had passed. Throughout the great conflict which followed, from 1914 to 1918, the Battalion fought in France and Belgium as part of the 12th Brigade of the 4th Division and earned much renown. Of the ten honours ordered to be embroidered on the King's colour, three were gloriously earned by the Pompadours alone—Le Cateau, Marne and Ypres, 1914.





King's Birthday, 1910. Pompadours Marching Past, Curragh.



THE 4th DIVISION SIGN.

This Sign was the Ram's Head taken from the Crest of the Lambton Family.

THE WAR, 1914-1919.

MOBILIZATION.

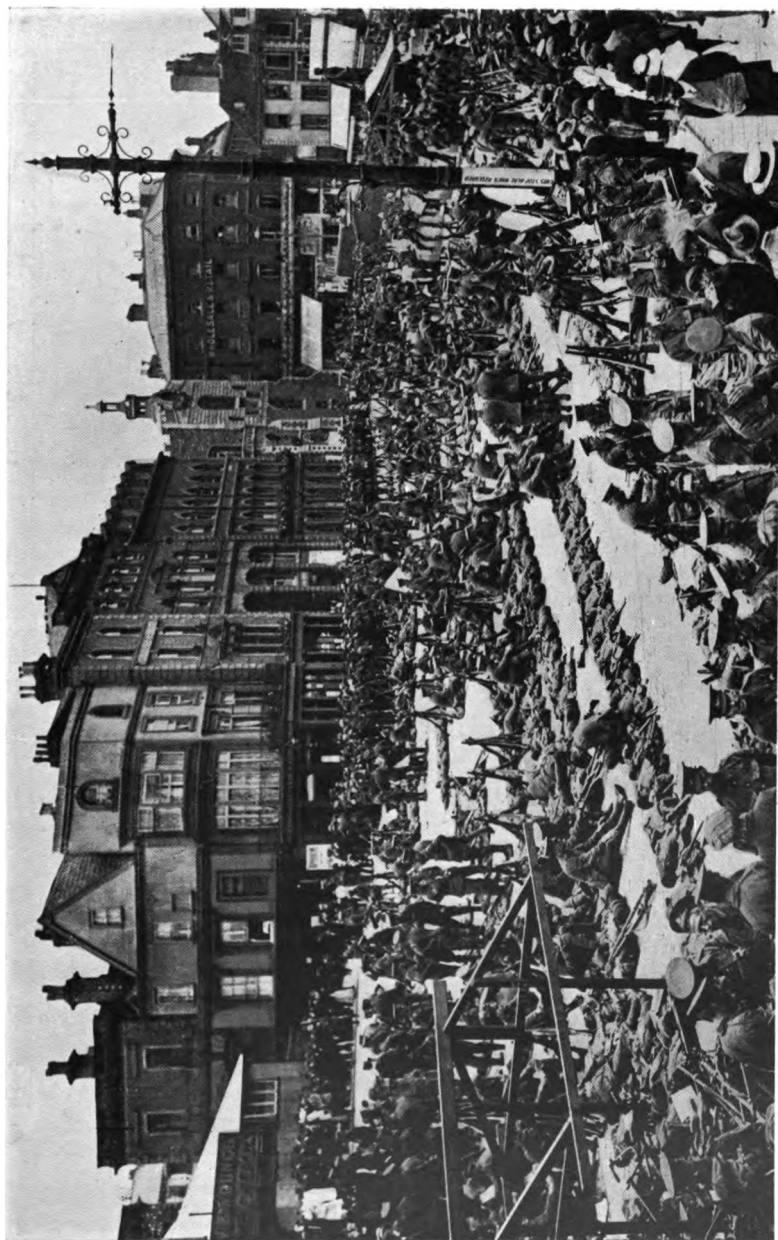
The 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment was at Sheerness during the Precautionary Period, which began on July 29th, 1914. The machine guns at the entrance to the dockyard harbour were taken over and the shore on each side of it placed in a state of defence. At 5 p.m. on August 4th, 1914, orders were received to mobilize for war service. That same night the searchlight at Sheerness began its vigil over the Thames Estuary, which was maintained uninterruptedly during the long period of the war. On August 5th certain officers and N.C.O's returned to Chatham, and in the early morning of the 6th (1.30 a.m.) 190 reservists arrived from Warley, the Battalion, on relief by 8th Middlesex (T.F.), reaching the dockyard town later the same day. Mobilization was over by 2 p.m. on the 7th. The Battalion was the first unit of the British Army to notify its mobilization complete. So quickly and so smoothly had the task proceeded, owing to the carefully thought out scheme prepared during the previous ten months by the Adjutant, Captain L. O. W. Jones, that the telegram reporting readiness was despatched to the War Office nearly 48 hours before the time allowed was due to expire. This caused a staff officer to be despatched to make certain that no mistake had been made! There was no mistake and at 11.30 p.m. the 2nd Essex entrained for Cromer, being billeted in the East Coast town the following day. Orders were received to move to Norwich on the 10th, and by midday they were in that city, being quartered at the Agricultural Hall. Still they had no rest, for two days later they were at Costessey Hall, near the city, billets in which they were succeeded by men of the 6th Essex a few days later. Whilst there a complete file of *The Times* was found, dating away back to 1814, and a wag among the officers cheerfully endeavoured to pass off upon his comrades a copy of August 16th, 1814, as a current issue. It was in these days that the I and II Army Corps were transported to France and the III Army Corps (Lieut.-General Sir William Pulteney) was preparing to follow. The 4th Division of that Corps (Major-General D'Oyly Snow) was composed of the 10th, 11th and 12th Brigades, and the 2nd Essex were attached to the last-named, under Brig.-General H. F. M. Wilson, C.B. The other battalions were 1st King's Own, 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. On August 18th the Battalion arrived at Harrow in two trains. Embarkation orders were received at noon on the 20th. The Pompadours entrained at Wembley Park Station on the night of the 22nd for Southampton, and during the day embarked

upon s.s. "Corsican," under the command of Lieut.-Colonel (later Brig.-General) F. G. Anley. Joining the Essex Regiment in 1884, he had seen considerable war service. He was in the Nile Expedition, 1884-5, and with the Egyptian Army in the Sudan Campaign, 1896-99. During the South African War he served with a mounted infantry battalion at the relief of Kimberley and the battles of Paardeberg, Driefontein, Johannesburg and Diamond Hill, whilst in 1904 he was attached to the Macedonian Gendarmerie, receiving the Order of the Liakat for his services. The officers who embarked with him were: Major G. M. Tufnell, Captain W. M. C. Vandeleur, Captain and Brevet-Major F. W. Moffitt, Captain C. F. de B. Boone, Captain A. C. Halahan, 12th Brigade machine gun officer, Captain C. J. Ryan, Captain W. J. Maule, Captain L. C. Brodie, Lieutenants J. Vance, G. C. Binstead, A. E. Maitland, A. F. H. Round, R. V. Read, J. W. Atkinson, A. J. R. Waller, B. S. Smith-Masters, 2nd-Lieut. N. M. S. Irwin, Captain and Adjutant L. O. W. Jones, Lieutenant and Quartermaster S. G. Freestone, with the following officers attached from the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion: Lieutenants G. R. Howard, A. Northey, A. Gardner, J. G. H. Kennefick, 2nd-Lieutenants W. P. Spooner and J. P. Pearce. Captain H. L. Scott, Lieut. C. C. Spooner and 2nd-Lieut. H. M. Heppell remained in England to form a service battalion.

IN FRANCE.

The 2nd Essex arrived at Havre at 10 p.m. on August 23rd and landed at 5 a.m. next day. They marched to No. 2 Rest Camp, but that was all the rest they were to know for many a long day. At 10 that night they were at the railway station, and by 8 p.m. on the 24th they were at Bertry, near Le Cateau. The Battalion bivouacked in a field near the station, heavy gun-fire being audible to the north-east. The inhabitants seemed quite unaware of the gravity of the situation and the girls amused themselves by throwing turnips at the men. Sleep was being disturbed, so an officer told them they would be better employed in praying to God in their churches for victory, as otherwise the Germans would be there next day. This had the desired effect and the villagers dispersed.

The situation had become menacing and critical. On August 23rd the German advance had been checked on the left at Mons by Sir John French with the I and II Army Corps, but owing to imminent danger of envelopment the British Army commenced to fall back rapidly in the early hours of the 24th. Fourth Division (III Corps) was in these circumstances pushed forward to protect the left flank, which was being seriously threatened, and it was for this reason that during the night of 24th-25th the Essex men marched north through Montigny, Caudry and Béthencourt. By 5.30 on the morning of the 25th they were across the River Erclin and in a field close to the main road



2nd Bn. The Essex Regiment resting in Norwich Market Place on August 10th, 1914.



*BRIG.-GENERAL F. GORE ANLEY, C.B., D.S.O.,
who commanded 2nd Bn. The Essex Regt. upon Mobilization, and also at the battle of Le
Cateau, August 26th, 1914*

half a mile north-east of a tiny village, Prayelle, close to Viesly. It was at this hour and in this place that they first came in contact with the enemy. Heavy gun and rifle fire was heard to the west in the direction of Quiévy and shells were observed bursting on the ridge west of Viesly. There was no news, but much anxiety, which was added to by the war-worn appearance of part of the 19th Brigade which passed through during the day. From them the Essex men first heard the details of Mons and of the severity of the fighting there. This Brigade, at that time an independent unit, had detrained at Valenciennes on the 23rd and had been hurried up to the east of Condé, on the extreme left of the British position. There it came into contact with the German right flank and fell back through Solesmes to Le Cateau. French Reserve Field Artillery also clattered by *en route* for Cambrai.

The whole line was in movement and the 2nd Essex had a strenuous and exhausting time on the night of the 25th. The Division had been ordered to take up position on the left of II Corps between Fontaine-au-Pire and Wambaix, with the reserve at Haucourt. At 8.30 p.m. "C" and "D" Companies, under Lieut.-Colonel Anley, were detailed as escort to the ammunition column, with orders to halt at Bethencourt, waiting till the whole of the 4th Division had passed through, and then to form the rearguard of the 12th Brigade. "A" and "B" Companies, with the regimental transport, under Major Tufnell, were advance guard to the Brigade and arrived at Longsart, near Esnes, at 3.45 a.m., on August 26th, followed by the Lancashire Fusiliers. The rearguard marched via Ligny and were delayed at the latter place by artillery being outspanned in the roads and men cooking their food, in consequence of which the infantry had to move in single file through the village. On getting clear Lieut.-Colonel Anley marched towards Haucourt, with French cavalry actively reconnoitring to the north, and Esnes was reached by 4.30 a.m., where the commander of the 56th received orders to remain in reserve. A troop of French cavalry were having their morning coffee, which they kindly shared with the Essex men. The expectation was that the retirement would be continued, for orders came to retreat to Le Catelet, but at 5 a.m. General Smith-Dorrien's decision to stand was conveyed to the divisional commander, General D'Oyly Snow, and at 5.30 a.m. the brigades were made aware that they had to stand fast. Sounds of heavy firing came from the right soon after 6 a.m., where the 5th Division was engaged in a fight for its very existence.

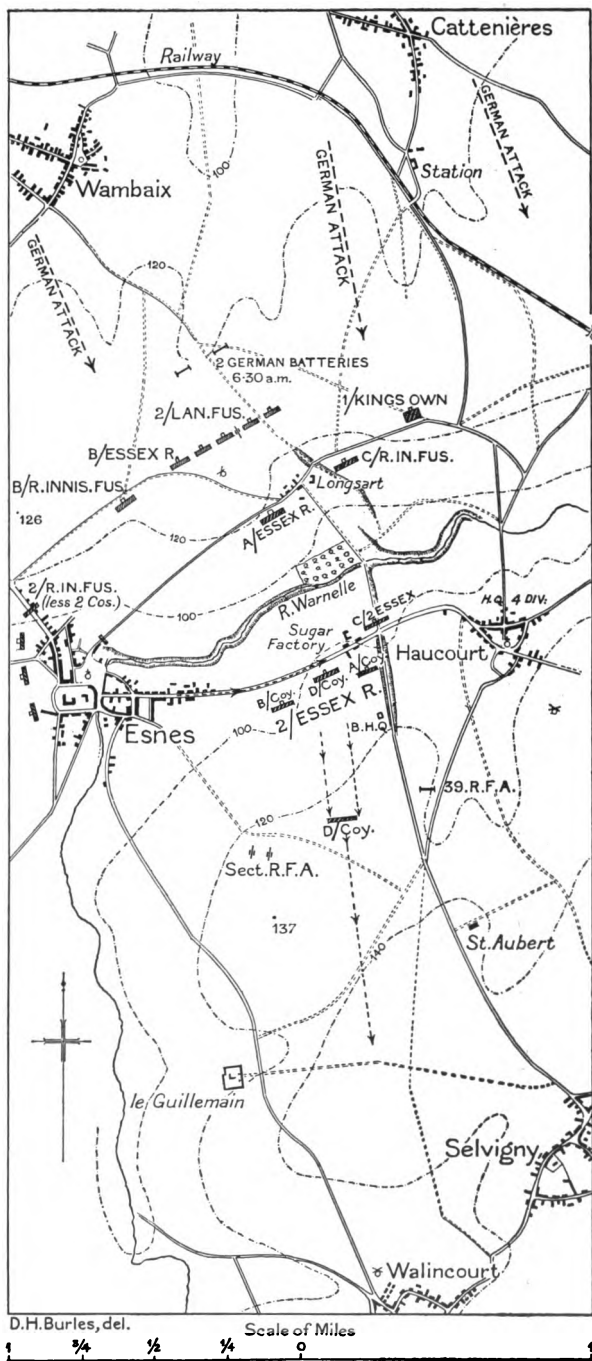
BATTLE OF LE CATEAU.

The Battle of Le Cateau was fought on August 26th and is one of the most hotly debated controversies left by the war. Was General Smith-Dorrien justified in offering battle or should he have continued his retrograde movement? A discussion of this problem happily is not necessary to the narrative of the deeds

of the 2nd Essex, and we are only concerned with the part played by the Battalion in that great encounter away on the left flank. The British I and II Corps had been separated by the Forest of Mormal, for it was believed that the woodland roads were not fit for an army to travel. Accordingly Haig, with I Corps, marched on the east to Maroilles and Landrecies, whilst Smith-Dorrien, with the II Corps, kept to the west side in the direction of Le Cateau. Thus on the night of the 25th, after a day of much fighting, there was a gap of seven miles between the two Corps. Von Kluck, with the First German Army, was pressing in upon II Corps, for his troops marched through as well as round the Forest of Mormal and severely harassed the withdrawal. In the early hours of the 26th Smith-Dorrien decided to make a stand and administer a check, utilizing in addition to his two weary divisions (3rd and 5th), the 4th Division, then concentrating in the neighbourhood of Le Cateau. The British line was on the left of the River Selle, between Le Cateau and Cambrai—5th Division about Reumont, one brigade being on the outskirts of Le Cateau, with cavalry on the right attempting to fill the gap between the I Corps; 3rd Division in a salient at Caudry, and the 4th Division round about Haucourt, with the British left flank on the ridge at Longsart to the N.E. of Esnes. The 19th Brigade were in reserve. Each Division covered approximately three miles of front. Sordet's cavalry ranged further to the west and beyond were French troops (Territorial and Reserve Divisions). The fighting was fierce and determined on that hot August day, the British Corps of 55,000 having to encounter an army of 140,000, which sought to envelop both flanks before breaking the centre. The 3rd and 4th Divisions stood firm, but by 1 p.m. the German pressure had become so formidable on the right that a further withdrawal was inevitable. "Before the sun set the II Corps was tramping over the belt of low upland in which the streams of Scheldt and Sambre take their rise, and on the morning of the 27th it halted north of St. Quentin, where the land begins to fall to the bright valley of the Oise. The chief miracle of the retreat had been effected."¹

Such was the Battle of Le Cateau in brief outline, but a more detailed survey is necessary of the struggle of the 4th Division on the left. The story of its arrival in the nick of time has been told by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, G.C.B., in his "Memories of Forty-Eight Years' Service": "The die was cast, and it is lucky it was, for it appeared afterwards that the 4th Division did not commence moving back from opposite Solesmes until long after dark, the rear Brigade not until midnight, and only reached the fighting position allotted to them on the west of the II Corps from Fontaine-au-Pire to Wambaix (a front of three miles) after daylight on the 26th. They were very weary,

1. "A History of the Great War," p. 173, Vol. I. (Buchan).



Position of 2nd Bn. The Essex Regiment at the battle of Le Cateau, August 26th, 1914.

having journeyed straight from England, detrained at Le Cateau on the 24th and marched thence, at 1 a.m. on the 25th, eight or nine miles to Solesmes, been in action there all day and marched back over ten miles in the dark to their position, which was reached after dawn on the 26th. The unfortunate part about this Division was that it lacked the very essentials for a modern battle. It had none of the following: Divisional Cavalry, Divisional Cyclists, Signal Company, Field Ambulances, Field Companies, R.E., Train and Divisional Ammunition Column or Heavy Artillery. Let the reader think what that means—no troops to give warning, neither rapidly moving orderlies nor cables for communication, no means of getting away wounded, no engineers, who are the handy men of the army, no reserve ammunition and no long-range heavy shell-fire, and yet the Division was handled and fought magnificently, but at the expense of losses far greater than if they had been fully mobilized.”

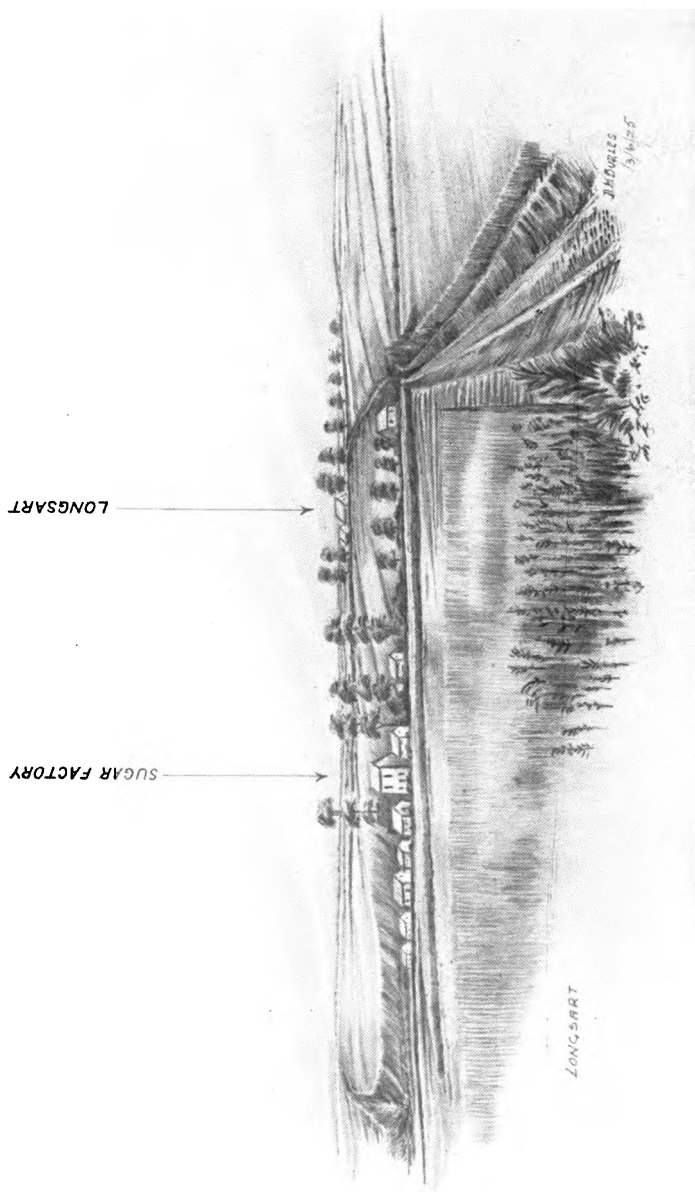
On the right, south of Fontaine-au-Pire, was the 11th Brigade (Hunter Weston), with the 12th (Wilson) on the left about Longsart Ridge, which was covered with beet fields and corn stooks. The 10th (Haldane) was in reserve at Haucourt.

The 11th Brigade was engaged in heavy fighting for some hours, but those interested in the 2nd Essex must follow the fortunes of the 12th Brigade, which, in fact, held the left of the line of the British Army. As already noted, “A” and “B” Companies were entrenched on the left of Longsart Ridge—“B” in the front line and “A” in support—with the Lancashire Fusiliers to their right, and upon the right of the Fusiliers were the King’s Own, who had reached Haucourt at 4 a.m., and after a short rest in the road had, about 5.45 a.m., moved up to prolong the line. Two companies of the Inniskilling Fusiliers were in support of the Lancashire Fusiliers, the other two companies being in reserve, with the remainder of the Essex in and about Esnes.

The most prominent feature of the landscape, when viewed later from the Essex headquarters south of the Esnes-Haucourt road, was the clear outline of the ridge, which bent inwards towards Esnes. A small ravine-like hollow scored the side of the ridge and to the right was the farm of Longsart embowered in trees. Yet a little farther to the right, upon the Esnes-Haucourt road, which ran between, was a sugar factory, also surrounded by luxuriant foliage. There was a clear view to the right as far as Haucourt and in the distance Ligny could be seen, whilst to the left the rolling country beyond Esnes was also visible. The ground in front of the units of the 12th Brigade on the ridge was so open that it was possible to see down to the railway line running to Cattenières. Shortly after 6 a.m., two French troopers riding towards the latter village were seen to suddenly turn and gallop at the top of their speed to the south-west. The enemy were advancing in force, being the 2nd Cavalry Division, with two Jäger battalions. At that moment overwhelming machine

gun fire broke upon the front of the 12th Brigade from the direction of Cattenières and struck the King's Own and the right of the Lancashire Fusiliers. The latter had entrenched, but the King's Own were caught in the act of deploying preparatory to digging-in and suffered severely. The men rallied and replied with accurate rifle-fire, but the machine guns were supplemented by German artillery, which came into action between Wambaix and Cattenières railway station and again swept the King's Own. Two companies of the Warwickshires strove to reinforce them, but were stricken as the King's Own had been and the survivors of the two battalions took post in a lane on the reverse slope north of Haucourt. The Lancashire Fusiliers held firm, but suffered severely as the enemy crept round and enfiladed them from the left, which also caused casualties to the two companies of the 2nd Essex and two companies of the Inniskilling Fusiliers which had reinforced the flanks of the Lancashire Fusiliers. To the west of Esnes the remaining companies of the Inniskilling Fusiliers were rendering valuable aid in hindering the effort to outflank. About 8.45 a.m., however, Brigadier-General H. M. Wilson decided to vacate the ridge. The King's Own were the first to move to the south side of the Warnelle Ravine and to cover whom two companies of the Warwickshires made a spirited counter-attack upon the ridge north of Haucourt. The Lancashire Fusiliers were the next to withdraw to the ridge on the south, under cover of the fire of "A" and "B" Companies of the Essex. Whilst this movement was being carried out, "B" Company was enfiladed by machine gun fire, which caused many losses. A battalion of German infantry (dismounted cavalry) also appeared along their front in close column, but were promptly smitten by the Essex rifles. The enemy machine guns had evidently been brought forward by cavalry, who had been mistaken for French troops covering the left flank. This enemy activity notwithstanding, the 12th Brigade were able to withdraw without further molestation, save for the incessant cannonade.

The noise of the firing at 6 a.m. aroused instant activity in Esnes and "C" Company (Captain Boone) and "D" Company (Brevet-Major Moffitt) stood to arms, their comrades of the French cavalry moving off as the companies fell in. A moment afterwards a French trooper dashed into the village and gave Lieut.-Colonel Anley a message, saying the 12th Brigade were being driven back. He at once ordered an advance to the sugar factory on the slope of Longsart Ridge to cover the retirement of the other units, "D" Company entrenching on the south side of the Haucourt-Esnes road, with their right opposite the factory, and "C" Company on the other flank. Whilst in this position the remains of "A" Company gradually formed up on the right of "D" Company and "B" on the left. The preparations to resist attack were calmly and methodically made. For instance, the range-



A view of Longsart Ridge from the site of Battalion Headquarters. Two Companies were posted on the Ridge and two in support along the far end of the field seen in the foreground

finder of "D" Company (Corporal Bloom) prepared and handed to each platoon a range chart, which was found extremely useful when the Germans sought to press their advantage further. A company of the Inniskilling Fusiliers in Esnes protected the left flank of the Essex. Shortly afterwards the Germans appeared. "C" and "D" companies immediately opened destructive fire at the extreme range of 1,300 yards and checked their advance, which had died away by 11 a.m. The commander of the Battalion, who was watching the operation from higher ground, later stated that the fire of the Essex men was most effective on the enemy supports, which were not observable by the former from their position in the valley, but which were moving forward in close formation. The tendency to take shelter whether it was a protection from gun-fire or no was exemplified when later in the day thick groups of German dead were found lying behind the corn stooks.

The new line taken up by the 12th Brigade ran from Ligny through Haucourt to Esnes. It was also held by the 10th Brigade, so that there was considerable intermingling of units. The Essex were about 500 yards in rear of their previous position, there being a better field of fire. About 1 p.m. an advance was made to Longsart Farm, the enemy having apparently evacuated the hill. Many killed and wounded were found there, but as the Germans reopened a heavy fire, the troops were ordered to retire again to the Haucourt-Esnes road. "The Essex men found among the German dead many Jäger with the same Gibraltar badge upon their caps which they bore themselves. It was a Hanoverian battalion, who had been comrades with the old 56th in the defence of the fortress one hundred and fifty years before." The shelling was maintained, but did little damage at this time, as the missiles passed over the heads of the Essex lying in the valley. Suddenly, about 3 p.m., a number of German guns appeared on the ridge N.E. of the farm, and a moment afterwards the air was thick with shrapnel, especially upon Haucourt village. The German 2nd Cavalry Division was being reinforced by the IV Reserve Corps. An officer wrote: "The Brigade was lying down in a long line on the forward slopes of the low hills south of the road. In front of us and dominating our position lay the ridge from which we had been driven in the morning, except for a company of Inniskillings, who were still gallantly maintaining their position on the extreme left. Through my glasses I saw the German guns gallop over the sky line, unlimber and open fire. The shrapnel caught the right of the Brigade and began sweeping along the line towards my position on the left flank. Unsupported to any extent by artillery fire and with the enemy's guns beyond effective rifle-fire, the centre and right began to move. I told my company we should have to go back, but we should do so at

1. The British Campaign, 1914, p. 106 (Conan Doyle).

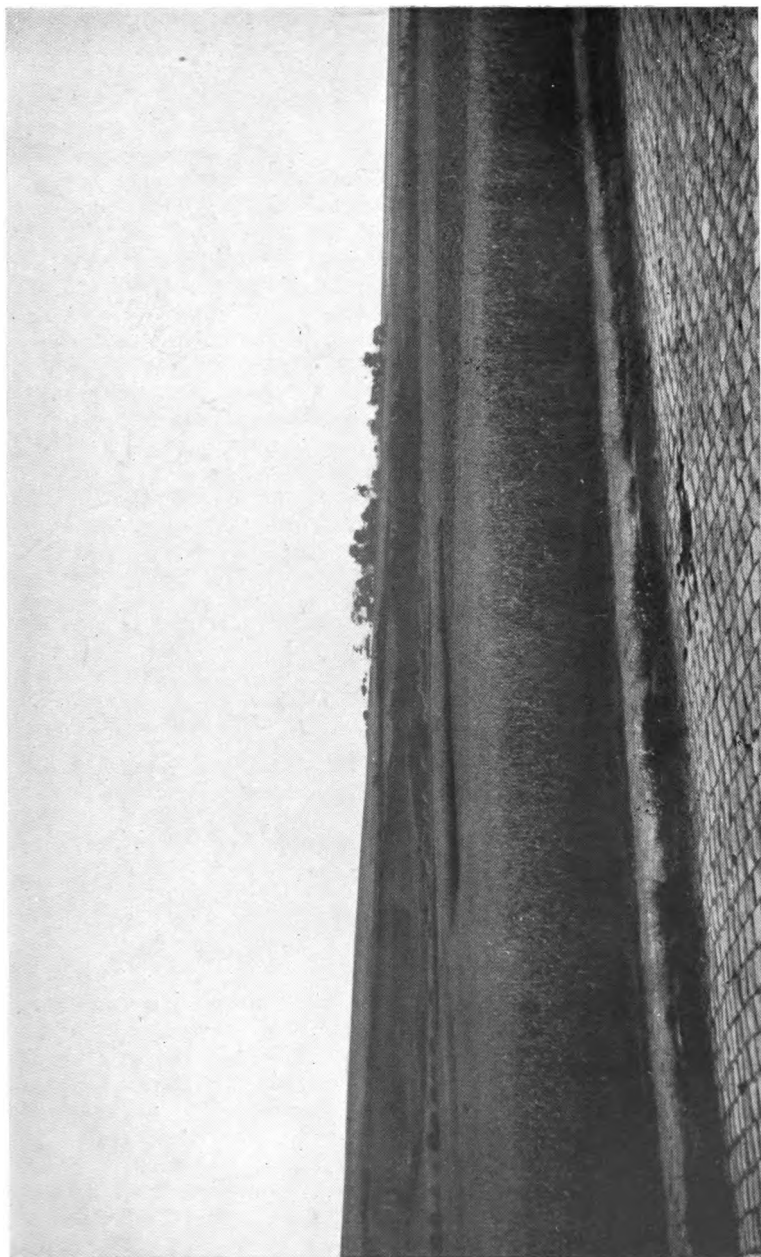
a walk. The shrapnel caught us as we went off, certainly as a rule bursting too high, but putting a severe strain on men who had never been under fire before. Not a man attempted to run. We passed two of our guns, the only ones I saw that day, the subaltern in command explaining he had just time to give them a couple more rounds." About 5 p.m. came the final withdrawal of the 2nd Essex. The march of two and a half miles across open country was a most difficult task, but when the men reached Selvigny village they formed up with absolute steadiness. Selvigny was to be held at all costs, but hardly had "C" and "D" Companies of the 2nd Essex begun to entrench on the left flank when the order came at 6.20 p.m. to again retire, and "C" and "D" Companies had to make their way across country in the rain to Vendhuille, where the remainder of the Battalion was sleeping, the advance guard having entered at 10.30 p.m. Lieut. Binsteed guided the column admirably through the intricate village route with only a small scale map. The men appeared quite unshaken by their experience. As they were forming up in Vendhuille Colonel Anley asked one of the companies what sort of day they had had. A voice from the ranks replied, "All right, sir, we can play this bowling easily"—a reply which caused general amusement.

The casualties of the 12th Brigade numbered over 1,000, and of this total 141 were from the 2nd Essex. The commander of "A" Company, Captain W. M. C. Vandeleur, was killed, with nine other ranks. Lieut. A. F. H. Round was mortally wounded, whilst Lieut. Smith Masters and 40 men were wounded. Lieut. G. E. A. Northey (3rd Battalion) and 98 men were reported missing, probably killed or wounded during retirement. This officer was subsequently notified as killed in action.

THE GREAT RETREAT.

The Battle of Le Cateau had an important effect upon the German plan of operations. Kluck, commander of the German First Army, in charge of the flanking movement on the right, came to the conclusion that for the time being the British Army could be disregarded. He determined, therefore, to find the French left flank, roll it up and force it in a south-easterly direction on to the centre and left of the German forces. Lanrezac, of the French Fifth Army, counter-attacked successfully at Guise, on August 29th, but this did not deter Kluck. With the co-operation of Bulow and the German Second Army on his left, the famous swerve away from Paris was undertaken which led to the exposure of the German right flank. This gave the opportunity for the victorious effort which was to be known as the Battle of the Marne, with its arrest of the tide of German invasion.

Before that day of deliverance, however, there was much footsore marching and travail of spirit for the French and British



Another view of Longsart Ridge taken from the support position of the Battalion.

Photo by H. H. Burrows.

armies. Remembering the lessons of the war of 1870, when the French armies were outmanœuvred and surrounded at Metz and Sedan, the allied command fell back until the favourable moment arrived for the counter-stroke, and that opportunity did not come until the troops were within sight of Paris.

Away on the left flank the Fourth Division had retired upon Vendhuille, not without some confusion and loss. 1st King's Own, of the 12th Brigade, and part of the Warwicks, of the 10th Brigade, did not receive orders to withdraw, and so held on until late into the night of August 26th, when, almost surrounded, they successfully fought their way out. The rest of the Brigade were not seriously molested in their retirement. Although they did not reach Vendhuille until 10.30 p.m., the Essex men were on the march again at 3 a.m. on the 27th, several officers who were sleeping in a barn having a narrow escape from being left behind. The Battalion had thus no opportunity of noting the plateau of La Terrière, near at hand—later a powerful sector of the Hindenburg Line, which was to remain in German hands until reduced in October, 1918—nor that to the south-east lay the famous Bellicourt Tunnel on the St. Quentin Canal. Three and a half miles long and at a depth of 50 feet underground, it was built by Napoleon in 1802-10, and served as a powerful point of defence of the main Hindenburg Line, having first been electrically lighted and ventilated. It was captured by the British exactly four years later. "The tunnel, though dark, is so straight that its northern exit is dimly seen as a point of light."

The 12th Brigade were rearguard to the Division and when the 2nd Essex marched through Ronssoy to the south end of the village they took up a position at Râperie with the Inniskilling Fusiliers to cover the retirement. "It was a most extraordinary feeling," wrote an officer, "to watch from a post on a slope which recalled Portsmouth Hills at Portsmouth the seemingly interminable procession of ambulances, wagons, artillery, machine gun teams and infantry units, all moving away from the sound of the guns, which crept nearer and nearer, for the cavalry were falling back before the German advance. It was a stern test of discipline for the men, for they must have realized that should the enemy suddenly break in they were expected to guarantee with their lives the safety of the Division. We settled down as best we could with the knowledge that each hour brought the Germans nearer and that the incessant gun-fire might break in earnest over our heads again." Happily the enemy did not press the pursuit and the main body having passed through, orders came to fall back and occupy a further position one mile south of Templeaux-le-Guérard, a high point commanding the road northward. Some hours passed and then the Battalion again retired, this time via Hervilly to Hancourt, which was reached after a two hours' march at 5.30 p.m. At this village

"A," "B" and "C" Companies were detailed for outpost duty. The Essex men were to know no rest, for at 10.30 p.m. they were on the move again, this time for Sancourt, near the north bank of the Somme. Their route lay through the hamlet of Vraignes, on to Mérencourt and across the stream to Monchy-Lagache, thence by Croix-Molignaux to Matigny, where considerable delay occurred. Having been marching and fighting since 2 a.m. on the 25th, the infantry of the Division were thoroughly tired out and artillery limbers, baggage vehicles and carts of all descriptions were used for their transport. When the Somme was reached at Voyennes, orders came for all ammunition on wagons not absolutely required and other impedimenta to be off loaded, officers and men to be carried instead to the full capacity of transport, both horse and mechanical. This instruction was strictly obeyed, with the result that officers lost their entire kits, except the clothing which they wore, and many men were without waterproof sheets for a month. Unnecessary hardship was thus inflicted on all ranks. Sancourt was entered at 10 a.m. on August 28th. The Battalion had then been on the march continuously since it left Vendhuille, at 3 a.m., on the 27th—a period of 31 hours, during which time it had traversed over 20 miles.

Sancourt was evacuated without resistance. The Germans, however, stubbornly contested the entry of the Canadian Corps in the Autumn offensive of 1918. Essex moved off at 2 p.m. as advance guard to the Brigade, and were soon at Offoy near Ham, with the Germans at the heels of the Second Corps. Across the Somme the village of Esmery-Hallon was reached, thence, after a long halt, by wooded country to Ferme du Bois Bru la Freniches. The wearied men bivouacked at 10.30 p.m. near the lock at Campagne on the River Mèze. The enemy pursuit had slackened in vigour, and 29th August was a much more restful day than the three preceding it. On the move at 9 a.m., the Battalion marched along the road running west of Le Chapitre Wood to Chevilly, where a halt was called at 10 a.m., the whole of the British Army being rested. The 2nd Essex supplied the rearguard of the Brigade and formed posts north and east of the village during the respite. It was upon the 29th that Sir John French had an important conference with General Joffre, the French commander, whereat the former agreed with the decision of Joffre to fall back behind the Marne.

At 9 p.m. the withdrawal was resumed, the route of the Battalion being by La Cressonnière and Sermaize to Noyon. The march was not delayed at this historic town, which was subsequently almost completely destroyed. Of the beautiful cathedral and the Sixteenth Century Hôtel de Ville only a few fragments now remain. Noyon is the birthplace of John Calvin; there Charlemagne was crowned and Hugh Capet elected King of the Franks. It was the British

headquarters from August 26th-28th, and was the nearest occupied town to Paris, 62 miles away. Re-entered by the French in March, 1917, it was lost during the break through of March, 1918, but the French had ample revenge in August, 1918, when, encircled by Humbert's army, Noyon was recaptured at the point of the bayonet. An army in retreat can have little thought, however, about points of historic interest, though, in fact, they were adding fresh history to districts already rich in military tradition. By Pont-l'Évêque the canal and River Oise were crossed, and the Battalion passed by Sempigny.

In the early morning of August 30th the 10th Brigade became rearguard and, with the rest of the 12th Brigade, the Battalion left Les Cloyes and, marching all day, past Bailly, Tracy-le-Mont and Berneuil, bivouacked in the street of Breuil at 10 p.m. Still moving southward, the Essex left the village at 7 a.m. on August 31st, and via Neufontaines, they reached the Forêt de Compiègne, one of the most beautiful woodlands in northern France, and where, four years later, Marshal Foch's reserves lay hidden. The town of Compiègne was the British Army headquarters for that day, though historically it is better known as the place where Joan of Arc was captured by the Burgundians and handed to the English. By the Paris road the Battalion reached Verberie at 10 p.m., to find the street blocked with transport. There the men bivouacked.

At 7 a.m. on September 1st, after leaving St. Vaast-de-Longmont, the Pompadours went across country to Ducy Baron and then took up position to cover the retirement of the Brigade, whilst from the east and north-east came the sounds of a heavy engagement. Near Néry, part of the 1st Cavalry Brigade had been surprised by the Germans, though the effect was negated by the magnificent bravery of "L" Battery, R.H.A., which remained in action until the last man fell, enabling the 1st Middlesex to advance and finally capture eight German guns. This engagement caused the withdrawal of the 4th Division to be suspended for the time being, but it was not involved in the fighting. Further east, on the same day, the Guards Brigade also had a sharp rearguard action with the oncoming Germans. Villers-Cotterets was occupied by the enemy, though it was re-entered ten days later. The town is memorable as the birthplace of Dumas the elder. It is surrounded by a great forest within which Mangin's army was secretly concentrated in July, 1918, and delivered a stroke which resulted in the capture of 20,000 prisoners and 400 guns. When the Essex arrived at Baron, at 9 p.m., they again found the road blocked with transport. The rest was a short one, for at 2.25 a.m. on the 2nd September they were again on the tramp, reaching Montagny, Le Plessis and then Dammartin-en-Goële. That night they left by cross-country route at 9.15 for the main road west of St. Mard, thence past Juilly,

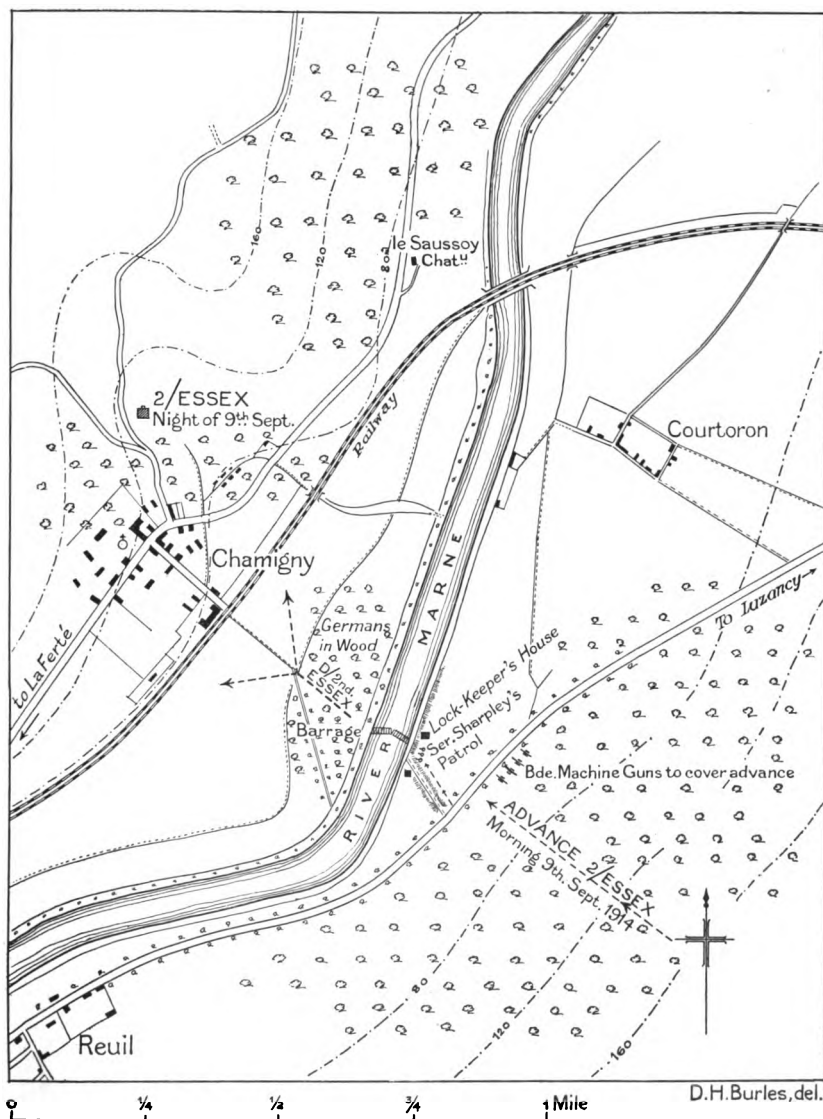
Nantouillet, St. Mesmes, Messy, Claye-Souilly, Annet, Thigny to Lagny, by the Marne, where they slept. At Lagny there were reports of German cavalry with machine guns and also of refugees cutting trenches across the road. The 12th Brigade were ordered to detach a party to investigate the latter statement and, if necessary, repair the damage.

There was not much movement on the 3rd, for the British Army was almost at the end of its long march. The Battalion did not leave Serris until 3 p.m., and via Jossigny, it came to Ferrières, where, at 8.30 p.m., it rested for the night in Baron Rothschild's park. On marching into Ferrières Park a very muddy and dirty private soldier in French uniform came up to Colonel Anley and told him dinner would be ready for the Essex officers at the chateau. This man was Baron Rothschild. "There must have been an impression," wrote an officer of the Essex, "that things were going right, as all night long battalions were passing on the road not singing 'Tipperary,' but 'A little grey home in the West.' This shows how greatly the German Headquarters staff erred when they thought the long retreat had shaken the morale of the British soldier." Before leaving Serris special reconnaissance parties were found by the Division for III Corps, an officer (Lieut. Binsteed) and four men being supplied by the 2nd Essex. The Essex detachment was mounted upon bicycles taken from French civilians passing along the road and to whom receipts were given in exchange.

In the early morning of September 5th march was resumed by Pontcarré and thence by Chevry to Brie-Comte-Robert, where a welcome reinforcement joined, under Lieut. Waugh, but even more welcome still was the news that the River Seine, which was reached at 8.30 a.m., was the limit of retirement. The long retreat had ended; the advance on the Aisne was to come.

BATTLE OF THE MARNE.

The series of operations known as the Battle of the Marne stretched over a front of 150 miles from Verdun to Paris, and the crucial days of which were from September 6th to 9th, 1914. It was an endeavour to force the enemy back to the frontier. The idea was that whilst the French centre and right held the German armies opposed to them, the French Fifth and Sixth Armies and the British Expeditionary Force were to outflank and isolate the German right wing, Kluck's First Army. There was fierce fighting in the east, but Kluck had already become alarmed at the Sixth Army's persistent effort on his flank and in the German General's endeavour to envelop his opponent a gap was opened between the German First Army and Bulow's Second Army, which was screened by Marwitz's cavalry, interspersed with Jäger battalions. The British Army pressed through this opening and their advance at this juncture, combined with the



Crossing the Marne, September 9th, 1914.

forward movement of the French Fifth Army on their right, was of importance in deciding the Germans to retreat and take up the formidable line of the Aisne in an endeavour to regain the initiative. Thus the war of positions was transferred from the neighbourhood of Paris to that of Rheims and Arras. "Tactically the result of the Battle of the Marne was somewhat of a disappointment. No part of the German host was annihilated or even immobilized for any length of time; the number both of trophies and prisoners was inconsiderable; the Germans broke off the fight at their own time; no great strategic pursuit such as had succeeded Jena took place; and the Germans were enabled to retire, if not unscathed, at any rate, in fair order. Strategically, however, the battle was of immense import. It marked for the Allies the definite turn of the tide of defeat, while for the Germans it signified no less the collapse of the plan with which they had entered the war."

On September 5th the British Army, lying between the French Sixth Army on the left and the Fifth Army on the right, was behind the Grand Morin, occupying the line Bailly—La Houssaye—Courpalay, Pulteney's III Corps (4th Division and 19th Brigade) being concentrated about Bailly. On the morning of the 6th, amid roars of cheering, the British force changed front and pressing back the now hesitating German advance guards, by evening the III Corps were at Villiers-sur-Morin and Crécy, II Corps at Coulommiers and I Corps at Choisy. The fighting on September 7th was bitter and prolonged, particularly on the left—where the French Sixth Army met with varying fortune in its desperate resistance to Kluck's attempt at envelopment—and in the centre, where Foch's Ninth Army achieved upon that and the following days almost legendary fame. The British troops passed the Grand Morin after smart cavalry combats and by evening III Corps was about La Haute Maison, II Corps around Aulnoy and I Corps about Chailly and Jouy-sur-Morin. The next day, whilst Kluck was violently attacking the French Sixth Army along the banks of the Ourcq, the British Army had a stiff fight by the Petit Morin, the steep valley and thick woodland materially aiding the obstinate resistance of the German cavalry. Before the day had run its course, however, this river had been also crossed. Then at dawn on September 9th—a wet stormy day—they passed the Marne, which, owing to an error of German judgment, was not resolutely held, and several of the bridges over which remained intact.

At 7.58 p.m. on September 5th the 4th Division received intimation that the British Army was about to assume the offensive north-eastward against the German right flank in conjunction with the Sixth French Army, the Germans having moved south-east

against the French Fifth Army at St. Barthélemy. The III Corps was to advance towards Serris, the II Corps being on its right. The 4th Division were ordered to furnish an advance guard of an infantry brigade (10th) and attached troops, and a left flank guard of two battalions and one battery on reaching Ferrières. The instructions to the advance guard were not to go beyond Serris, but upon arrival there they were to throw out a screen to cover the advance of the rest of the Division and to reconnoitre as far as they could with the cyclist company in an effort to obtain touch with the enemy. The Division started the forward movement at three on the morning of September 6th. By 5.5 a.m. the divisional cyclists reported that the roads were clear for a mile round Serris and the G.O.C. ordered the occupation of Bailly. It was then determined to assemble the Division in and about Jossigny under cover of the advance guard at Serris and Bailly. The left flankguard was withdrawn to the latter place and the 10th and 12th Brigades were instructed to prepare for an advance upon the plateau to the north-east about Magny and Romainvilliers, whilst the 11th Brigade established an observation line along Villiers—Coupvray and endeavoured to get in touch with the II Corps. Both the 11th and 12th Brigades were to throw out outposts to the north and north-west. At 2 p.m., whilst the divisional headquarters were at Villeneuve-le-Comte, information came that I Corps were engaged with the enemy near Rozoy. II Corps immediately moved south-east in support and the III Corps inclined east in co-operation, the special duty of the 4th Division being to observe the valley of the Grand Morin from Tigaux to Couilly and to provide against attack from the north-east by creating a strong post near Villiers-sur-Morin. The 12th Brigade had an observation line from Crécy to Couilly, which was later extended westward to Montry, with a detached post at Magny-le-Hongre. At 7.40 p.m. the Brigade commander was ordered to reconnoitre three bridges over the Grand Morin, i.e., near Voulangis, Crécy and Montbarbin, orders having come to hand that the pursuit of the enemy was to be pressed. On the following day the Division moved in two columns, 12th Brigade being with the left and crossing Montbarbin bridge in the direction of Sancy. Reports of contact with the Germans were frequent all along the line and the constant gun-fire caused the brigades of the 4th Division to be kept well in hand.

At 11 a.m. on the 7th the 2nd Essex were advance guard to Brigade, taking the northerly route by Villiers-sur-Morin road to Bouleurs, Coulommiers and Sancy to La Haute Maison. They bivouacked half a mile south-east of the village. In their approach thereto they surprised a patrol of about 20 Uhlans, who hastily retired under a hail of bullets, leaving two lances and a helmet with a bullet through it as souvenirs. The Battalion, although under infantry fire from the edge of the wood just

north of La Grande Rue, sustained no casualties during the day, but the Inniskilling Fusiliers on the right were heavily shelled when going into bivouac. 2nd Lieut. Irwin and two men reconnoitred during the night through Pierre Levée and found evidence of further enemy retirement, though the patrol was fired on from Les Savants Farm. Still acting as advance guard, the Battalion sent a platoon forward into Pierre Levée to secure an important point, for which the commendation of the G.O.C. was subsequently received.

The Essex moved off at 6.30 on the morning of 8th September, and after a halt for some time at Les Savants Farm, another move was made close to Petit Courrois, where breakfast was cooked. The Essex were then ordered across country with another battalion to seize the high ground about Perreuse Chateau to cover the divisional artillery, which was taking up position to shell La Ferté, at which point the enemy were crossing the River Marne. At 2.15 p.m. the two battalions (Essex and Inniskillings) were at Les Corbiers and Perreuse Château, under Colonel Anley, the remainder of the 12th Brigade being at Jouarre and Romeny. Whilst there the Brigade was ordered to move upon Courcelles bridge (one mile north-east of Jouarre), whilst the 11th and 19th Brigades crossed the Petit Morin and pressed on to La Ferté. As the Essex and Inniskilling Fusiliers came in sight of Courcelles, the place was hastily evacuated and the two battalions pressed on to La Ferté, where there was some street fighting ere the portion of the town south of the Marne was cleared of the enemy. As the leading company of the 2nd Essex got within rifle shot of the Marne they saw one of the two bridges blown up (both were destroyed) and rifle-fire from houses across the river caused slight casualties in "D" Company and the machine gun section.

The day had been full of excitement. Orders were to push forward as rapidly as possible. There were high hopes of a Sedan.

It was whilst at La Ferté that a draft joined under Captain Pechell. It had left the 3rd Battalion at Harwich, on August 24th, and sailed from Southampton, arriving at Havre the next day. The retreat from Mons was in full course and after a stay of three days at the Havre base the draft were hastily evacuated and went south by sea to St. Nazaire on the mouth of the Loire. After a stay of 48 hours, the party were entrained for Coulommiers, which was the railhead, and after long marches daily the headquarters of the 4th Division were reached just as General D'Oyly Snow was leaving after his wound. A night was spent in the battalion transport line and next day the sounds of the battle of the Marne were heard. The bridges were partially destroyed and the draft helped the transport over the railway bridge east of the barrage and near the village of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The 2nd Essex were located just beyond the road junction north-east of La Ferté. During the march up the line Captain Pechell

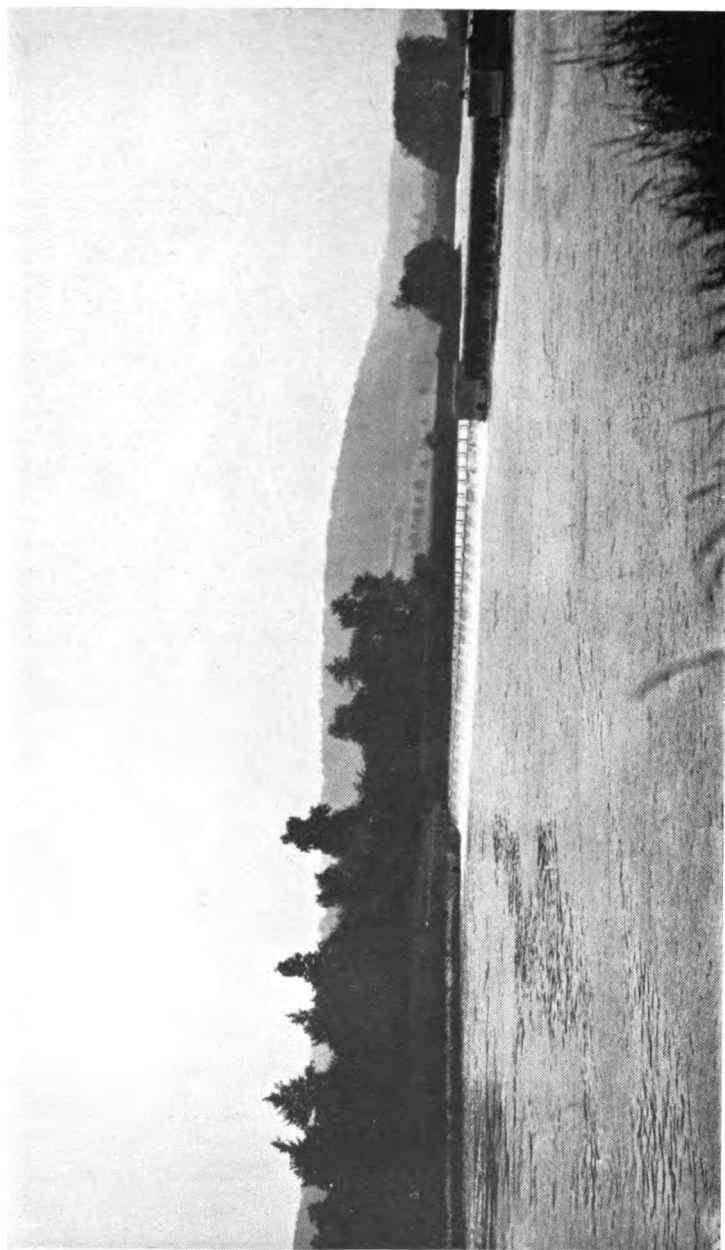
had collected about 20 stragglers and so arrived with nearly 120 men and, what was as important, a few of the old N.C.O's. All along the sides of the road to Sept-Sorts could be seen the relics of the Germans' hurried retreat—remains of carts, shell dumps and dead animals were scattered about.

CROSSING THE RIVER.

September 9th was even more fruitful of incident than the preceding day, for during the daylight hours the Marne was crossed, and a notable feat of arms it was. The 4th Division was ordered to secure the high ground about Tartarel and at 5 a.m. the Battalion moved out of bivouac and took part in this successful movement. The 11th Brigade had been unable to cross the broken bridges at La Ferté owing to the snipers and machine guns posted in buildings on the opposite side of the river and there was insufficient bridging material to span the Marne, which at this point ran broad and deep. In an effort to turn the enemy's flank, Lieut.-Colonel Anley received orders at Tartarel to choose a point on the right to cross the river, the Lancashire Fusiliers and Essex being placed under his command. He decided to make the attempt at the lock at Chamigny, lying to the west of Luzancy. "D" Company acted as advance guard and moved through the woods to within half a mile of the barrage. Here the men were halted, whilst the company commander, Major Moffitt, and Lieut. Binsteed went forward to reconnoitre, being joined shortly afterwards by the Brigade machine gun officer, Captain Halahan. They decided upon the most concealed line of approach and a place for the machine guns a little to the right, and the Company was guided to the edge of the woods within four hundred yards of the objective. In front was the roadway, then the water meadows and causeway leading to the lock-keeper's house. The Marne lay beyond. On the far bank, in the picturesque sylvan setting of autumn, was Chamigny, though the beauty of the situation was little in mind of the observers. Were the enemy holding the village in force and were they still withdrawing? That was the preoccupation. A white spaniel created some apprehension of discovery by the watchful enemy because it would insist upon running about looking for rabbits whilst Major Moffitt was pointing out the situation of the barrage to Lieut.-Colonel Anley. It was agreed that if the position was occupied the enemy were in a small copse on the bank opposite the lock gates. This surmise proved correct, for later over a dozen Germans were observed hurrying across the open country to the rear, whilst a continual stream of horsemen and wagons were seen retiring along the tree-lined roadway clearly marked on the skyline beyond Chamigny. Accordingly Sergeant Sharpley, with eight men, was instructed to make a dash from the woods, cross the road and under cover of some dead ground to reach



Lock of Chamigny, sketch taken from the wooded slope from which the Battalion deployed.



Another view of Chamigny Lock.

Photo by H. H. Burrows.

the canal bank. As they ran down the slope the enemy opened fire from the other side of the canal, receiving an instant reply from our machine guns. Under cover of this fire the plucky little party reached the canal bank, having sustained two casualties. Private Gray returned under fire to point out a covered way to the lock and, guided by him, two platoons, under Lieut. Vance, reinforced Sergeant Sharples's party. The lock-keeper's house, a square two-storied building, on the Essex side of the Canal, overlooking the enemy's position, appeared to be locked and unoccupied, but the door was suddenly opened from within and our men rushed in, to find only the lock-keeper and his wife in possession. All was ready for crossing. A strong firing party lined the canal bank, to cover the passage of the river. Major Moffitt, commander of "D" Company, ran forward, revolver in hand, and crossed by the narrow railed footbridge which ran along the top of the lock gates, a torrent rushing beneath. Some of the planks had been removed, but he clambered over by the girders and, luckily, found only a dead German in possession on the far side, the others having fled. The Company rapidly followed and, extending outwards, formed a bridgehead, under cover of which the remainder of the Battalion crossed, the Lancashire Fusiliers and Rifle Brigade following in their train.

There was an alarm that the railway bridge at Saussoy Château was mined, but examination revealed that the Germans had only prepared it for that contingency. The Battalion settled down to sleep at the road junction, a quarter of a mile north-north-west of Chamigny, well satisfied with their day's work, for although too late to intercept the German retreat to Montreuil, they had gained much credit by the manner in which the crossing of the river had been effected and also from the fact that the prompt occupation of the lock gates had cleared troublesome opposition from a road bridge on the right.

THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

The First Battle of the Aisne, which marked the last stage of the campaign of the Marne, embraced an attempt by the Allied left to push the German right from the positions north of the Aisne and thus to keep in being the war of movement. The operation was one of the most difficult for troops to execute, for a full river, some 170ft. broad and 15ft. deep in the centre, had first to be crossed under observed artillery fire. Then the heights beyond had to be seized and maintained against obstinate opposition. "The actual passage of the Aisne is likely to be remembered in the annals of the Army as a very remarkable feat, consisting, as it did, of forcing a passage frontally without possibility of manœuvre."¹ The gap which had opened between

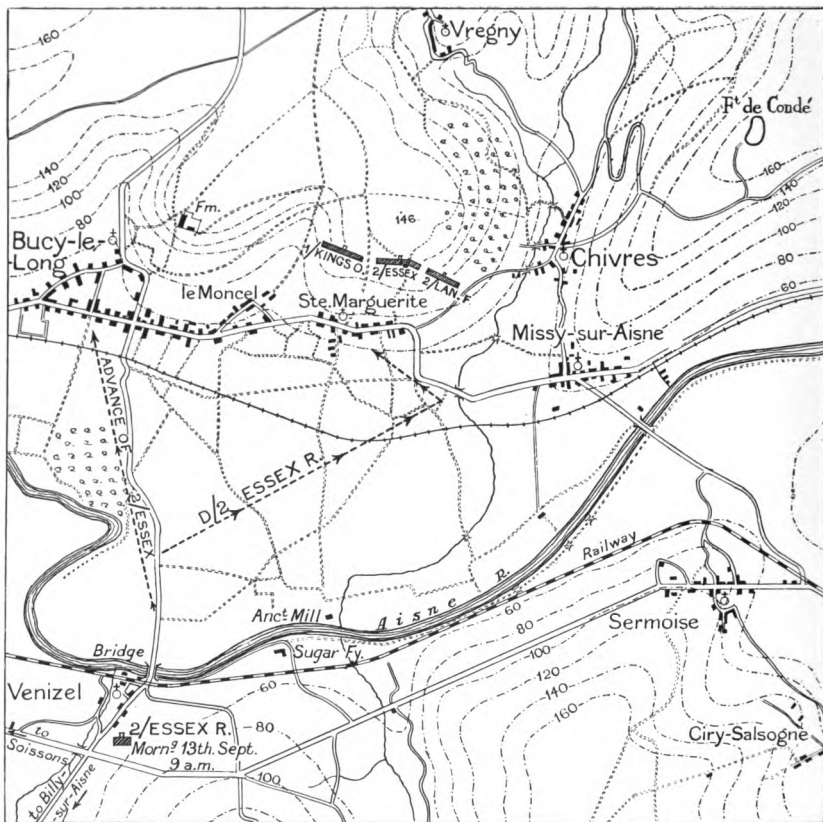
1. "Military Operations, France and Belgium," (*Official*), p. 408, Vol. I.

the German First and Second Armies had been widened and there was considerable uneasiness manifested by the enemy High Command at the persistent advance of the British forces. The VII German Reserve Corps was hurried from Belgium and by an all night march its commander was enabled to reach the Chemin des Dames, the key to the position on the Aisne, by 2.30 p.m., on September 12th, just an hour before the leading infantry brigade of the I British Corps was near Moulins, only a mile away. Thus was the breach closed and the British onslaught stayed, to be followed by weary trench warfare of months and years, and the desperate effort at envelopment by both Allies and Germans which ultimately extended the battle front to Dixmude and the sea.

"The German armies had chosen for their stand, not the line of the Aisne, but the crest of the plateau beyond it, at an average of two miles from the stream side. The place had once been used before as a defensive position by an invader—by Blucher in February and March, 1814—and the study of that campaign may have suggested the idea to the German Staff. A more perfect position could not be found. It commanded all the crossings of the river and most of the roads on the south bank, and even if the Allies reached the north side the outjutting spurs gave excellent opportunities for an enfilading fire. The blindness of the crests made it almost impossible for the German trenches to be detected."

On the evening of 12th September III Corps (still composed of 4th Division and 19th Brigade) was on the British left in the neighbourhood of Buzancy, just to the south of Soissons, with II Corps in the centre and I Corps on the right, Maunoury's French Sixth Army moving on Soissons. The next day, 13th, the bulk of the British Army crossed the Aisne to the east of the famous little French town, doing so with the river in flood and in heavy rain. Fourth Division went over at Venizel, on the main road from Soissons to Rheims, by means of a partially destroyed road bridge. Its total demolition was prevented by the promptitude of Major Wilding, of the Inniskilling Fusiliers, who sent two companies to seize the bridge. Their appearance caused the Germans to make a premature attempt, but only one charge of four exploded and the remainder were removed after dark by Captain Roe in the light of an electric torch. II Corps had much hard fighting ere they took up positions with their left resting in the village of Ste. Marguerite, part of the 5th Division having to be ferried across on rafts. I Corps had also a difficult passage, but ultimately made good at Passy, Moulins and Vendresse. When night fell only six infantry brigades of the British Army were left on the south bank, including the 19th Brigade of III Corps. The offensive effort persisted and the 4th Division endeavoured to win the uplands of Bucy-le-Long, lying

1. "A History of the Great War," pp. 270, 271. (*Buchan*).



D. H. Burles, del.

Mile 1 3/4 1/2 1/4 0 1/4 1/2 1 Mile

Scale of Miles

Crossing the Aisne and advance on Ste. Marguerite, September 13th 1914.

between Vrégný and Chivres, from the German II Corps, but was stayed by artillery fire. On the British right I Corps effected a lodgment on the plateau in the neighbourhood of Troyon and Chivy, but by the 15th heavy enemy reinforcements caused a reaction. The 4th Division had difficulty in maintaining the ground south of Vrégný and the same task was being faced by the 5th Division near Chivres and Condé. Hope still ran high that the Chemin Des Dames would ultimately fall to the Allies, but though a gallant movement by the French Sixth Army eased the anxiety of the 4th Division, the French on the right had to give ground, and by September 18th both forces were digging in, and the famous highway remained in German hands—a constant anxiety to the Allies.

The greater part of September 10th was occupied in passing the 4th Division over the repaired bridges at La Ferté and the Saussoy railway bridge. 12th Brigade were advance guard and as part of this force, at 9 a.m. on September 10th, 2nd Essex marched to the road junction at les Davids and halted until 1 p.m. Then, by the main road, the Battalion passed through Dhuisy, Coulombs, Hervilliers, Cerfroid, throwing out an outpost line along the road from the last-named place to Brumetz, where many signs of the enemy's hasty retirement were found. Quitting the bivouac at 5 a.m. on the 11th, the Battalion halted for two hours at Cerfroid and again at Montigny for one hour. Via Mareuil-sur-Oureq, St. Quentin-Louvry and Passy, Noroy was reached and the men were in billets at 7.30. They were early on the move on the 12th, for at 3 a.m. they were tramping past Chouy, Louatre, Villers-Hélon, Tigny, Villemontoire, Rozières, La Carrière, to L'Évêque, and it was 6.30 p.m. before rest was found in a cave upon a farm, there being much anxiety lest the straw upon which the men lay might catch fire and thus lead to a terrible disaster. The officers managed to obtain shelter from the heavy rain in a verandah, but their rest was frequently disturbed by other units trying to obtain a footing there.

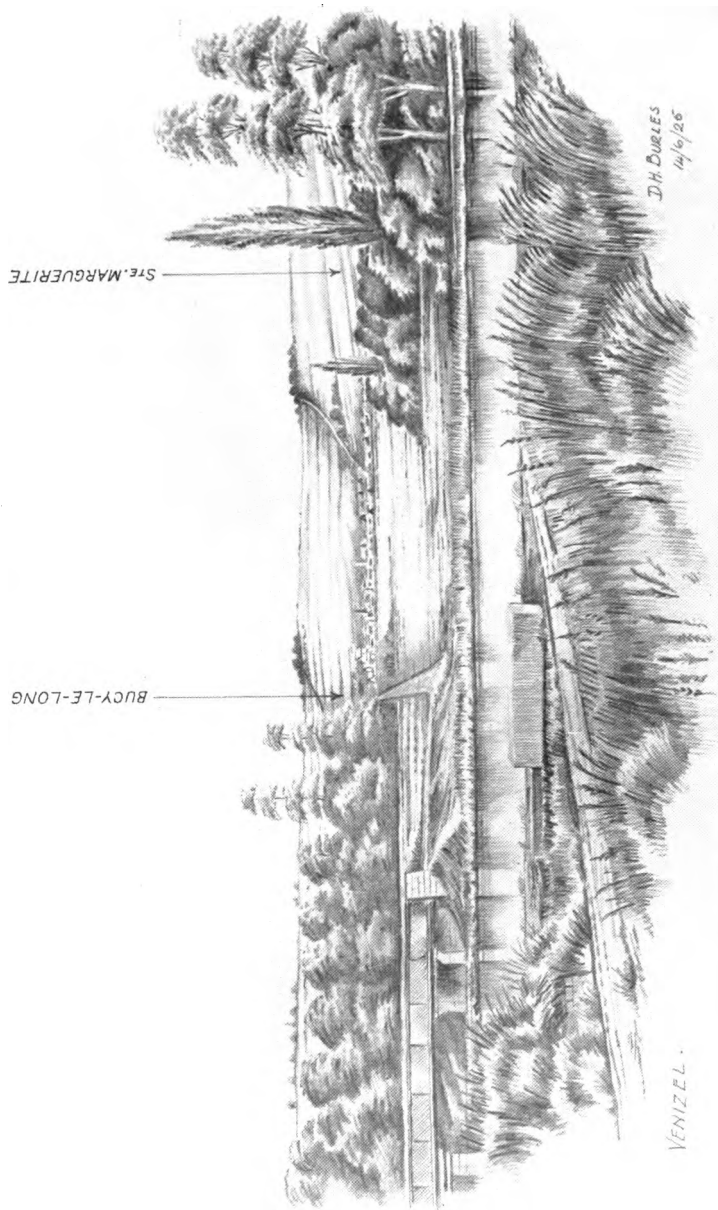
On September 13th, in pouring rain, the Battalion crossed the Aisne. They left the bivouac at 7 a.m., the unit being ordered to march via Billy-sur-Aisne and Venizel to Ste. Marguerite. After an hour's rest, Venizel was reached at 9 a.m. and the Battalion was temporarily halted in column in a field by the roadside, in readiness for crossing first the railroad and then the river bridge. The girders of the latter had been cut, but the reinforced concrete of the roadway was strong enough to take infantry. Whilst waiting to pass over, enemy shell-fire was active and the machine gun teams had a number of casualties, heavier losses being avoided because one of the companies had just moved to shelter in a sunken road. The 11th Brigade were already across, having passed over in single file by 3 a.m. They secured the crest by a surprise attack as day was dawning. That Brigade was thus the first

British formation across the Aisne. The 12th Brigade was in support of the 11th and by 11.15 a.m. three of the battalions were over, including the Essex. The advance of the Brigade is thus vividly described by Hauptmann Bloem, who observed the movement from Chivres Ridge: "Across the wide belt of meadow extending between our chain of heights and the course of the river stretched what seemed to be a dotted line formed of longish and widely separated strokes. With field glasses we could see that these strokes were advancing infantry, and unmistakably English From the bushes bordering the river sprang up and advanced a second line of skirmishers with at least ten paces interval from man to man. Our artillery flashed and hit—naturally, at most, a single man. And the second line held on and pushed always nearer and nearer. Two hundred yards behind it came a third wave, a fourth wave. Our artillery fired like mad; all in vain, a fifth, a sixth line came on, all with good distance and with clear intervals between the men. Splendid, we are all filled with admiration. The whole wide plain was now dotted with these funny khaki figures, always coming nearer. The attack was directed on our neighbour corps on the right (the II). And now infantry fire met the attackers, but wave after wave flooded forward and disappeared from our view behind the hanging woods that framed the entrance to the Chivres valley."

The Pompadours, after crossing, traversed the two miles of water meadows to Bucy-le-Long in extended order, ten paces interval, at 100 yards distance, and though the shell-fire was heavy, the casualties were slight. "D" Company brought up the rear of the 2nd Essex and had an exciting time ere finally reaching the Battalion again. At the bridge the company commander could not see the remainder of the Battalion, but was advised by an Engineer officer to go to the left of the road. The men crossed at the double and then broke into artillery formation just as methodically as in peace time. At a wood close by the rear of the Lancashire Fusiliers was encountered and the Company were then informed that their comrades were on the right of the road. Accordingly they inclined to the right at the double under shell-fire and had arrived nearly opposite to the village of Chivres, when word came that the Battalion was at Ste. Marguerite, some hundreds of yards to the left. This intelligence was most timely, for Chivres was at that time held by the enemy and in such strength that later on an attack by the Lancashire Fusiliers was repulsed.

When the leading companies of the Essex reached Bucy—the 12th Brigade had assembled there by 1 p.m.—word came to move to Ste. Marguerite, which had been captured earlier in the day by the Rifle Brigade. After passing through the town the men climbed the wooded height to the north by means of a narrow sunken path. On arriving at the crest they occupied the open land lying to their front and also the woodland to the

1. "Military Operations, France and Belgium," (*Official History*), p. 330n, Vol. I.



Sketch of ground over which the 2nd Essex advanced to Ste. Marguerite, taken from Venizel Station.

right through which could be seen the beautiful Chivres Valley, with Missy in the hollow and beyond the thick tree-clad heights which hid Fort Condé from view. The enemy movements below could be easily observed. The Essex were ordered to cover an attack upon Chivres trenches by the Lancashire Fusiliers. The effort was not successful owing to heavy fire from the south of Chivres village and the western slopes of the Chivres spur. The Pompadours then held the high ground north of Ste. Marguerite, with their right thrown back along the eastern side of the wood before-mentioned. There they dug in and remained for the night, Lancashire Fusiliers on the right and the King's Own on the left. The position possessed elements of anxiety owing to enemy activity and for a time small arms ammunition ran short, but this danger was relieved at 6.25 p.m., when three cart-loads were received. The casualties were light, comprising ten killed and 32 wounded, the latter including Lieut. Read.

Writing of his experiences that day, the commander of "B" Company (Captain Pechell) tells the story of the advance: "The bridge at Venizel was found to be damaged and the King's Own and the Essex halted under cover of the village in close column of platoons and lay down. Along came a Taube, which dropped tinsel on us, and in five minutes shells from an 8 inch battery started to arrive, causing casualties. I was soon after ordered with the men I had with me across the bridge and to advance to the high ground north of the river. This I did by sending small parties across the bridge, which, when on the other side, moved in waves over the open ground under long range shrapnel fire. When the Battalion was under the shelter of the hills it was re-formed and an organized advance began towards the top of Ste. Marguerite Hill. The various companies were given different jobs; mine was to clear the top of Ste. Marguerite. I went up with my company in artillery formation. At the top of the hill I halted the company and took a section forward with me to reconnoitre. We came under close range fire from a motor gun near Vrégnny village and five of the party were wounded, though not seriously. It was impossible to see far because of some entrenched positions in front, and the company dug in behind the line of the crest, with the German artillery finding the range. About 7 p.m. we were relieved by "A" Company and side-stepped to the east, taking a refused flank position facing Chivres. Owing to various reasons, partly the darkness of the woods, I got my line in rather a tangle, but by midnight things were fairly all right, though I did not get into touch with Battalion headquarters until next morning."

The Essex underwent a good deal of shelling and were soon busy with the spade upon a trench system. A disused cave was requisitioned as battalion headquarters and that of the support company, the only anxiety being lest there was a means of access

to the enemy from the valley below. An ingenious method of lighting was adopted. Lamps were improvised by making holes in the tops of tins of rifle oil and inserting pieces of unravelled string to serve as wicks. Two Frenchmen were vastly astonished to find the Essex in possession of this cave when they came to feed the horses which they had hidden there. When the line was shortened a few days later the Battalion was able to put a company in reserve and went into real houses at Ste. Marguerite, which the Quartermaster (Captain Freestone) made extremely comfortable. The disposition of the Battalion then was : One company in the open land to the north and another in the wood overlooking Chivres, whilst a third was in the cave in support and the fourth in reserve at Ste. Marguerite. On September 14th Brig.-General H. F. M. Wilson succeeded to the command of the 4th Division, Major-General D'Oyly Snow having been seriously disabled, and Lieut.-Colonel Anley went to the 12th Brigade, the command of the 2nd Essex devolving upon Major G. M. Tufnell.

THE TRAGEDY OF WAR.

"While at Ste. Marguerite," wrote an officer, "I got my first hot bath since I left England in an old wine cask sawn in half, and taken in the presence of about a dozen people." "I also enjoyed a bath in that kindly wine cask," said another, "but what struck me most in the Quartermaster's billet was the way the men treated the wrinkled old dame who owned the house. A typical French peasant, she had lost either her son or grandson in the war and used to sit weeping in a corner, for her sole supporter had gone and her small property was ruined. Then some Tommy employed by the Quartermaster would shyly take the old gnarled hand, pat it and say, 'Tea ?' The old dame understood, but she probably did not know that her cup always had beside the tea a spoonful of rum in it. The battle has since swept many times backward and forward over Ste. Marguerite and one hopes that death was merciful and spared her four years of misery."

AT STE. MARGUERITE AND MISSY.

The 11th Brigade occupied the heights from Ste. Marguerite to Crouy, reinforced by the 10th Brigade, and the 12th Brigade were to their right. The task of the 4th Division, on September 14th, was to move northward over the plateau between Vréngny and Crouy to aid the advance of the 5th Division, but the German positions were too strongly held, for the two British divisions had against them the whole of the enemy II Corps and parts of the III and IX. Meanwhile, the I and II British Corps were passing the Aisne and pressing upon the Chemin des Dames, only to realize, on September 15th, that the limit of advance had been reached for the time being. The deadlock was at hand. "The 4th Division, however, as its trenches improved and as its ranks were refilled, showed much enterprise. It could do



The Cave on the Hillside above Ste. Marguerite which served as shelter for the Battalion

Photo by H. H. Burrows.



The Valley of Chivres, which the 2nd Essex overlooked from the Hill above Ste. Marguerite.

Photo by H. H. Burrows.

nothing on a great scale, but by pushing trenches forward and by worrying the Germans perpetually with patrols and snipers it established over them a well-marked ascendancy."¹ An attack by the Germans upon the British left front beyond the 11th Brigade caused some loss to the Essex, whose casualties included one killed and twenty wounded. Major Tufnell was among the latter. The trenches were improved during the next day, which again was full of incident, two being killed, Captain C. F de Bohun Boone dying of wounds and fifteen other ranks being wounded.

The following day was comparatively quiet, only one being wounded, but the casualties were more severe on the 17th, when Lieut. Vance and seven others were wounded. The eastern face of the wood was then handed over to the Lancashire Fusiliers. Between the 18th and 23rd September there was little to record. One man was killed and eight were wounded. There was more activity on the 24th, when, in the afternoon, Lieut. Howard reconnoitred the enemy's position towards Vrégný. He succeeded in getting within 150 yards of their trenches and found them protected by barbed wire entanglements. At night another trench was commenced 100 yards in advance of the front line with the intention of preparing for a forward move, and the day closed without casualty. To the end of September there was little of note, the chief episode being an early morning burst of artillery fire on September 26th. The monotony of life in the trenches was relieved by an occasional day off in the village of Ste. Marguerite, where a welcome wash and rest were secured. October was heralded by enemy artillery fire, which, however, did no damage. At 6 p.m. the Battalion handed over the trenches to the Royal Irish Fusiliers and took over a portion of the line held by the 5th Division on the right. The relief was complete by 9 p.m. and the Essex marched via Ste. Marguerite to Missy-sur-Aisne, taking over the defence of the village about midnight from the Dorsets and Yorkshire Light Infantry. An officer of the Essex wrote that he was fortunate enough to occupy a small house where the owner boasted a good cellar and had some bottles of fine Macon wine. A colleague described the post as "an unpleasant place, as it was continually shelled. The rations came in at night and we could also hear the rumble of the German wagons. Apparently there was a tacit understanding not to interfere with each other's transport." It was little wonder that the spot was "unpleasant," for the enemy were entrenched in a wood on a hill about 850 yards on the north side of the village, which entirely commanded the British positions, and sniping was frequent. "C" Company lost a number of men from this cause, including Private Brown, a noted athlete before the war. The Essex men energetically improved the defences and 2nd Lieut. Irwin reconnoitred the route leading to a bridge of barges a quarter of a mile east of

1. "Military Operations, France and Belgium," (*Official History*), p. 409, Vol. I.

Venizel. The mechanical nature of the German gun-fire—which was a feature persisting throughout the campaign—was noticed on October 3rd, when a heavy gun threw in shells at intervals of a quarter of an hour throughout the day. The intensity of the shelling increased during the evening and work on the defences had to be stopped. The casualties were one killed and two wounded. Bombardment broke out again at ten the next morning, but this time there was response from our artillery across the Aisne, and it promptly ceased. The close of October 5th was full of incident, for the enemy briskly shelled the trenches at 5 p.m., then half an hour later they sniped the east end of the village. At 6 p.m. orders came to move on relief by French troops, only to be countermanded an hour later. October 6th, however, brought the welcome news that relief was to be effected by French troops, and at midnight the Reserve Battalion of the 15th French Regiment took over. Although, at that time, it did not know its destination, the Battalion was *en route* for Flanders, to take part in the dreadful whirl of fighting known as the First Battle of Ypres.

FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

“I am anxious to bring to special notice the excellent work done throughout this battle by the III Corps under General Pulteney’s command. Their position on the right central part of my line was of the utmost importance to the general success of the operations. Besides the very undue length of front which the Corps was called upon to cover (some 12 or 13 miles), the position presented many weak spots, and was also astride of the River Lys, the right bank of which from Frélinghien downwards was strongly held by the enemy. It was impossible to provide adequate reserves and the constant work in the trenches tried the endurance of officers and men to the utmost. That the Corps was invariably successful in repulsing the constant attacks, sometimes in great strength, made against them by day and by night is due entirely to the skilful manner in which the Corps was disposed by its Commander, who has told me of the able assistance he has received throughout from his staff and the ability and resource displayed by Divisional, Brigade and Regimental leaders in using the ground and the means of defence at their disposal to the very best advantage. The courage, tenacity, endurance and cheerfulness of the men in such unparalleled circumstances are beyond praise.” Thus wrote the late Earl Ypres (then Sir John French) of the work of the Essex men and their comrades in the First Battle of Ypres, which lasted from the middle of October to the middle of November, 1914. It was the prelude to the great struggle for the possession of the Ypres Salient which ran throughout the war and in safeguarding which a quarter of a million British soldiers died.

When the opposing armies came to a virtual standstill along



*LIEUT.-COLONEL G. M. TUFNELL,
who commanded the Battalion from September, 1914 to January, 1915.*

the line of the Aisne both Commands sought upon their sea flank for that opportunity for envelopment which would restore the war of movement and, therefore, of decision. Thus it came about that there were hurried movements to the Allied left flank to reinforce the retreating Belgian Army and to meet huge German forces, in part released by the fall of Antwerp. These resulted by October 19th in the battle line being extended to the sea. Both ally and enemy refused at first to recognize that this locking of the door to grand manœuvre had introduced the long trial of the trenches, and the First Battle of Ypres was fought with both sides struggling to secure the initiative. In the early stages of the First Battle of Ypres the British Army were occupied in offensive operations with intent that the decisive phases of the war should be undertaken in Belgium, but ere the fighting died down, owing to the enemy's numerical strength, the role which the armies in this sector fulfilled was to "occupy strong defensive positions, holding the ground gained and inviting the enemy's attack; to throw these attacks back, causing the enemy heavy losses in his retreat and following him up with powerful and successful counter-attacks to complete his discomfiture." Thus it came about that the British Army fought for existence upon territory in which their ancestors under Marlborough had achieved martial fame two centuries before. La Bassée then was a great obstacle to the invasion of France and it proved an even more formidable interruption of the British advance from the south from 1914 to 1918.

The little town of Ypres was once the centre of the wool trade of Flanders. Its red-coated burghers in the Fourteenth Century assisted to shatter the army of Robert of Artois, so that "seven hundred pairs of gilded spurs were hung in the Abbey Church of Courtrai as spoil of battle." Ypres holds the mind of the present British generation as the great battle point of the war, the epitome of our struggle. It is, therefore, a little difficult to realize that the line of battle ran for long miles on either side and that which we know as the First Battle of Ypres was part of a bitter contest stretching from Arras to the sea, with desperate fighting throughout its length, particularly at Arras, La Bassée, Ypres and the Yser. The line was dented and, indeed, at times, broken, but at the close the sorely-tried legions of France, England and Belgium had barred the southern gate to the Germans. "Ypres, like Le Cateau, was in a special sense a British achievement. Without the splendid support of d'Urbal's corps, without the Belgians on the Yser and Maud'huy at Arras, the case would have, indeed, been hopeless, and no Allies ever fought in more gallant accord. But the most critical task fell to the British troops, and not the least of the gain was the complete assurance it gave of their quality."¹ Anxious days were to follow in the

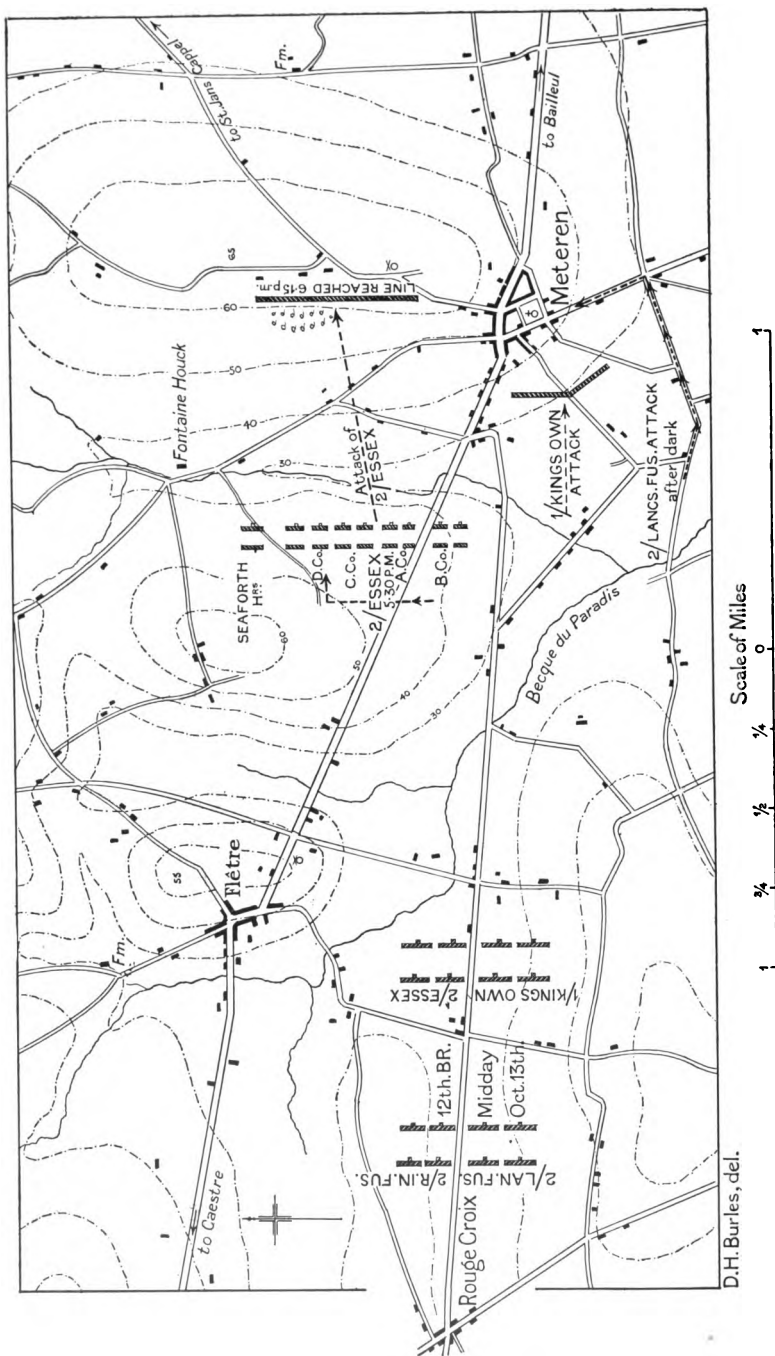
1. "A History of the Great War," p. 366, Vol. I. (Buchan).

subsequent years of the war, but the Germans never quite succeeded in unlocking the door. The Allies eventually flung it wide open for the march through Belgium to the Rhine.

In the British portion of the line the I Corps was grouped about the Salient itself, with support from the 7th Division, which had been landed at Ostend, and, together with the retiring Belgian Army, had caught the full fury of the German onslaught. II Corps operated against La Bassée until relieved by the Indian troops, then being transferred to the Ypres Salient. Between them was III Corps in the neighbourhood of Armentières, with Conneau's French cavalry on the right and Allenby's cavalry divisions on the left. These are most easily remembered British points of the great battle in which 267 Allied battalions met and resisted 402 battalions, mainly composing the German Fourth Army.

General Pulteney's III Corps held the right centre of the line in the Battle of Ypres and their fine fighting quality had undoubted influence in preserving the Salient to I Corps. They were in the Black Country of France, which begins ten miles north of Arras. "From there," Buchan says, "to Lille and Armentières is the mining region of the Pas-de-Calais. Every road is lined with houses; factory chimneys and the headgear of collieries rise everywhere; and the whole district is like a piece of Lancashire or West Yorkshire, where towns merge into each other without rural intervals. The Lys flows, black and foul, through a land of industrial debris."

III Corps, which had been completed by the arrival of the 6th Division, reached St. Omer by the night of October 11th and next day was at Hazebrouck. On the 13th General Pulteney moved towards the line Armentières-Wytschaete, with the possibility of being suddenly required to support II Corps to the south-east. German IV Cavalry Corps were known to be in and about Meteren, with some riflemen, and it was also thought that an advance guard of another corps was with them. Movement was difficult in the enclosed country and rendered more troublesome because of fog and rain. The enemy were dislodged without much difficulty. By 10 on the morning of the 14th Bailleul was occupied by our troops and on the 16th Armentières was entered. An effort was made to clear the right bank of the Lys on the 18th, but by this time the German main strength was being encountered. The Corps line ran from Radinghem to Frélinghien, and the British advance was firmly held from Le Gheer in the east to Radinghem on the right of the Corps. The 12th Brigade were involved in heavy fighting, which resulted in the enemy occupation of Le Gheer on October 20th. A counter-attack planned by General Hunter Weston and Brig.-General Anley, in command of the Brigade, was brilliantly successful, about 200 prisoners being taken and 40 of our men released. Frequent attacks were made along the whole Corps line on October 22nd, 23rd and 24th, the 12th



D.H. Burles, del.

The taking of Meteren, October 13th, 1914.

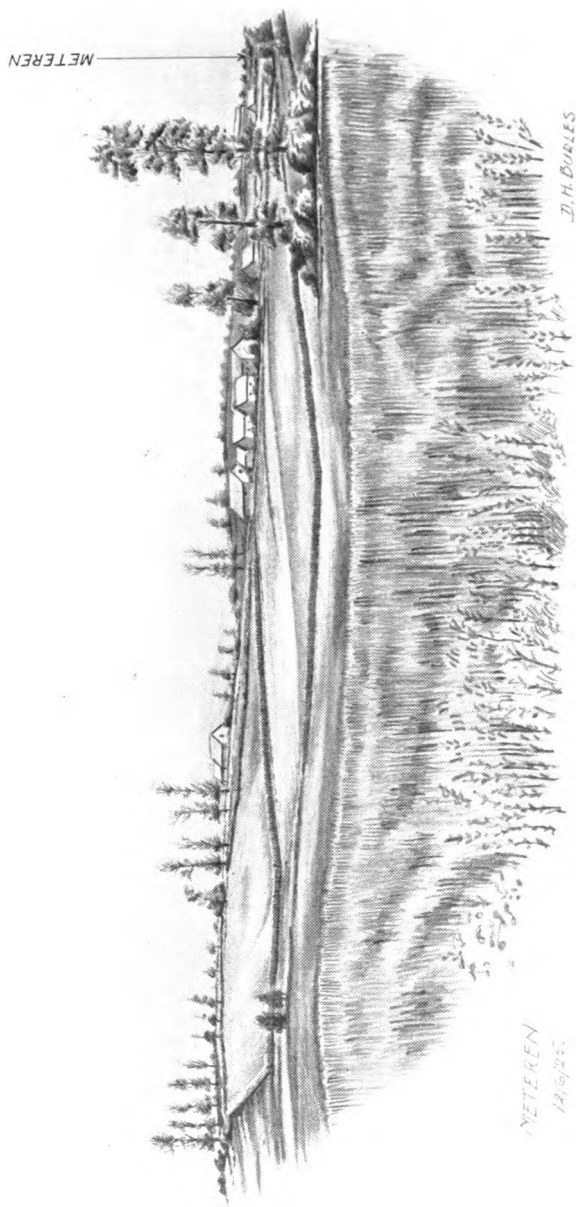
Brigade being particularly affected in the centre, countering a strong enemy effort from Frélinghien. Le Gheer was again attacked on the evening of 29th October, but held secure. South of Croix Maréchal a midnight attempt enabled the Germans to enter a portion of the trenches held by 19th Brigade, but they were ejected later, although the enemy had a strength of twelve battalions in that sector. All this time the weather had been wet and stormy, but it became clear on the 29th. Then on the 30th the line of the 11th Infantry Brigade was broken in the neighbourhood of St. Yves, but was promptly restored, whilst the next day the responsibility of the 4th Division was extended by taking over the extreme right of the trenches hitherto held by 1st Cavalry Division. Constant attacks on the III Corps continued even as the enemy made his desperate massed efforts on Ypres, but by November 17th the last attempt was broken. "The weather had changed to high winds and snow blizzards, and in a tempest the First Battle of Ypres died away." Let us now come to the part played therein by the Pompadours.

THE TAKING OF METEREN.

When the 2nd Essex were relieved by the French at Missy they crossed the Aisne at 2 a.m. on October 7th, 1914, by the pontoon bridge at Moulin les Roches without interference by the enemy and by Acy and Ecuiry came to Septmonts at 5.30 the same morning. Later in the day 2nd Lieut. Pearce reported with a draft of 60. On October 8th orders came for a move to Ambrief, the route being by Ecuiry and Chacrise. The men paraded at 9 a.m. the next day and waited till 1 p.m. Transport left for an unknown destination under Major Moffitt, but the Battalion still remained at Septmonts. It was not until 7.50 on the morning of October 11th that the Essex men were taken in 51 motor 'buses to Le Meux through Hartennes, St. Remy, Villers-Cotterets, Béthancourt and Verberie. At Le Meux the Battalion entrained and left at 9.30 p.m. by Amiens, Boulogne and Calais to Hazebrouck, which was reached at 2 p.m. on October 12th. There was some excitement in the town, as a German cavalry patrol had been driven out only the day before. Early morning gun-fire was heard the next day in a south-easterly direction, where the 6th Division was known to be. The enemy were in some force in the vicinity, and as the role of the British troops was offensive, the Essex men were soon on the move again. At 9.15 a.m. they left Hazebrouck and at 10 a.m. had reached Rouge Croix, where the 6th Division, on the right, and the 4th Division, on the left, were ordered to take the Meteren Ridge, from La Couronne to Fontaine Houck, a front of five miles, whilst the Cavalry Corps co-operated by a movement against Berthen.

The 4th Division advance at 1.30 p.m. was upon a line from Meteren to Fontaine Houck (both inclusive), the 12th Brigade

having as their objective from the village of Meteren (inclusive) to a point a quarter of a mile north-east of Meteren. The Brigade's dispositions were Essex and King's Own in the front line and Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Lancashire Fusiliers in the second line, the frontage being 800 yards, with a similar distance between the two lines. The dividing line between the battalions was the Rouge Croix—Les Ormes road. The 10th Brigade acted in unison on the left, the Seaforths being next to the Essex. The enemy, consisting of units of the 3rd and 6th Bavarian Cavalry Divisions, with four Jäger battalions and artillery, had been located in the vicinity of the main road leading from Flêtre to Meteren, and the intention was to seize the cross-roads on the Meteren side of Flêtre, to connect up with the 10th Brigade and then to advance upon Meteren itself; Essex to the left and the King's Own to take the village. The Essex approached the position in artillery formation, two companies in the front line and two in support, and at 2.30 p.m. they reached a group of cottages on the main road near Les Ormes. The leading companies were ordered to extend on the north side of the road. Coming out from the shelter of the cottages, the men were met with heavy enfilade fire from machine guns, which were difficult to locate owing to the heavy rain and fog. The guns were believed to be posted in Meteren Church, which stood in clear outline on the hill-top. Their fire did not do much hurt, for most of it whizzed harmlessly over their heads. The Warwickshires, part of the advance guard, which earlier in the day had been supplied by the 10th Brigade, had already reached some buildings at the foot of the hill upon which Meteren stands; they could be seen moving about in the mist. The leading companies came up level with them and at 3.30 p.m. a third company was also pushed forward from the support line, the fourth company later being used by Major Tufnell to prolong the line on the left. To perform this movement the fourth company had to proceed a couple of hundred yards to the left, which was accomplished by turning the men of the extended lines into file and moving across the front. "Such a performance," wrote an officer, "would have driven umpires at manœuvres frantic. We carried out the movement unscathed, however, though there was heavy machine gun fire passing overhead. Apparently the Germans could not depress their guns sufficiently to catch us." The final dispositions were made under cover of some farm buildings. So sudden was the advance of the leading platoons that they leaped into the ditch forming the Meteren Becque just as the enemy became aware of the movement. Covered by their fire, the supporting platoons reached the Becque. The prospect of a successful attack did not appear promising, for 300 yards of glaxis-like slope had to be crossed, serrated by a long hedge running diagonally across the front. A large farm building lay near



Sketch of the ground to the left of Meteren over which the Battalion advanced.

the crest. The Brigade was without artillery support. The enemy were not visible, but the fire from the hedge was fairly heavy. As the leading platoons climbed out of the Becque to again push forward, the Seaforth Highlanders came up on the left, prolonging the line and probably overlapping the enemy's right. The German fire slackened and the impulse to go ahead came suddenly. The extended lines surged forward and in a few minutes the Essex were through the hedge and pushing up the hill. A few Jägers were captured in the farm buildings. Three of them, armed, were taken by C.S.M. Tipler with an empty rifle. The thick hedges of the slopes caused some confusion and on reaching what appeared to be the top of the hill it was found to be a false crest and it was necessary to reorganize the companies and move still further forward. Heavy firing on the right revealed that Meteren was still occupied and darkness was fast approaching. The Battalion bivouacked for the night on the ground they had gained, pushing forward entrenched outpost companies. Two small and apparently deserted farmhouses lay in the vicinity. Cries of "Anglais" by the troops produced sudden movement, lights were kindled and the buildings were found to be crowded with frightened inhabitants. Their joy was unbounded at their deliverance and they brewed all the coffee they possessed for the good cheer of their deliverers.

The Essex had been favoured in their advance by the nature of the ground, but the King's Own, on the right, had suffered considerably and Brig.-General Anley was unwilling to put his reserve (Lancashire Fusiliers) into the fight until his right was secure, for a counter-attack was apprehended from that direction owing to the gap which existed between the 6th and 4th Divisions, and which was not filled until the following day. The Hampshires, from divisional reserve, were accordingly placed at his disposal and in the darkness the Lancashire Fusiliers were ordered to work round the south of the village. They were stopped by gardens and wire fences, but ultimately tried the roadway from the south-west. This movement was successful and the Germans hurriedly evacuated Meteren, leaving 25 prisoners in our hands. The place had been skilfully fortified; machine guns placed on the roofs of houses, walls loopholed, and trenches dug outside clear of the buildings, the whole so concealed that it was impossible to discern the defences from the front. The total casualties in the Brigade were three officers and 49 other ranks killed and four officers and 60 other ranks wounded. Of these, four killed and 21 wounded belonged to the Essex.

Before the hours of darkness had passed, an officer of another regiment reported to the Essex that Meteren was clear of the enemy. He was very modest concerning his share in the matter, stating he had lost his way and entered the village by accident. The news was very welcome, however, and by 5 a.m. the Battalion

had pushed forward so as to look down over the plain stretching before them on the eastern side of the hill, Seaforth Highlanders being on the left of the Essex and Inniskilling Fusiliers on the right. "As I gazed down on the plain from the top of the Meteren Hill," wrote a combatant, "I thought of what might have been if—well, if we had got on the hill sooner, if it had not been foggy, if the enemy had been retreating across the plain, and, lastly, if our artillery could have got up in time. I was dreaming of a gunner's paradise."

At 9.45 the same morning, October 14th, the 12th Brigade received orders to advance again, and by twelve noon were marching past Meteren. After a short rest of four hours they were on the move once more, the whole Division traversing the road to Bailleul, which the Essex men reached at 8 p.m., occupying billets there for the night. One of the companies was allotted a convent in the main square. The nuns and other people gave harrowing details of the horrors perpetrated by drunken enemy soldiers on the women of the town. An Essex officer, who prided himself upon being a French scholar, was sent to find food for the officers. Approaching the nunnery, he asked the nun at the wicket, "Avez vous beaucoup de faim?" The last word he pronounced as "femme" and he really meant "I am very hungry," but the nun, mistaking his intentions, turned very pale and rushed away from the gate, shrieking "Les Anglais aussi." After a short talk, however, the nuns realized the mistake and the story was told to a delighted audience of nuns and officers that evening at dinner. They treated the Essex extremely well and the officers all got excellent beds, with the best of sheets and pillows, and, what was more, a really good wash.

The next day (October 15th) march was resumed to Le Leuthe at 6 p.m., in an effort by the 4th Division to secure the bridges over the Lys, a muddy stream, at Erquinghem and Pont de Nieppe. Two hours later a halt was called, orders being given to remain in that position until morning. The first bridge had been seized undamaged, but the Pont de Nieppe was held by machine guns and the Division waited until the 6th was across the Lys and could assist it. Part of the Battalion was lucky enough to be billeted in cottages, but the remainder had to sleep with what comfort they could upon the roadside. By noon next day (16th) the 11th Brigade was across Erquinghem and at 4 p.m. the Pont de Nieppe was seized, a fortunate first round from a field gun striking the barricade on the bridge and scaring the defenders. The 12th Brigade, on the left, occupied Ploegsteert and Hill 63, guns being placed on the latter. Hill 63, over 200ft. high—which later became a famous observation post—with the Château and woodland known as the Bois de Ploegsteert, upon the main road from Messines to Ploegsteert, was allotted as the territory of the 2nd Essex, who reached their positions via Petit

Pont with orders to extend the line to Le Gheer. On October 17th the 10th Brigade entered Armentières. Early on October 18th the Essex were ordered to Ploegsteert in reserve, leaving "C" Company at the Château as escort to the guns. At 2.50 p.m. they were on the march to Houplines to report to G.O.C. 10th Brigade, which was experiencing difficulty in seizing the difficult ground about Verlinghem. Progress remained slow in this sector. Five hours later the Essex were billeted in the southern corner of Armentières, placed in reserve. As they were making preparations for the night's rest machine gun and rifle-fire was heard towards L'Épinette. The enemy was beginning to reveal his strength and heavy fighting was in progress. The XIX German Corps was in position against the III Corps. At 6 a.m. on the 19th orders came to be ready to move after 9 a.m., the Battalion and the Inniskillings being in divisional reserve. Accordingly, at 12.30 p.m., they marched back again, via Houplines, to their original position near the Château. There the ground and billets were found to be occupied by 1st Cavalry Division, so that back the Battalion went to Ploegsteert and slept once again in billets.

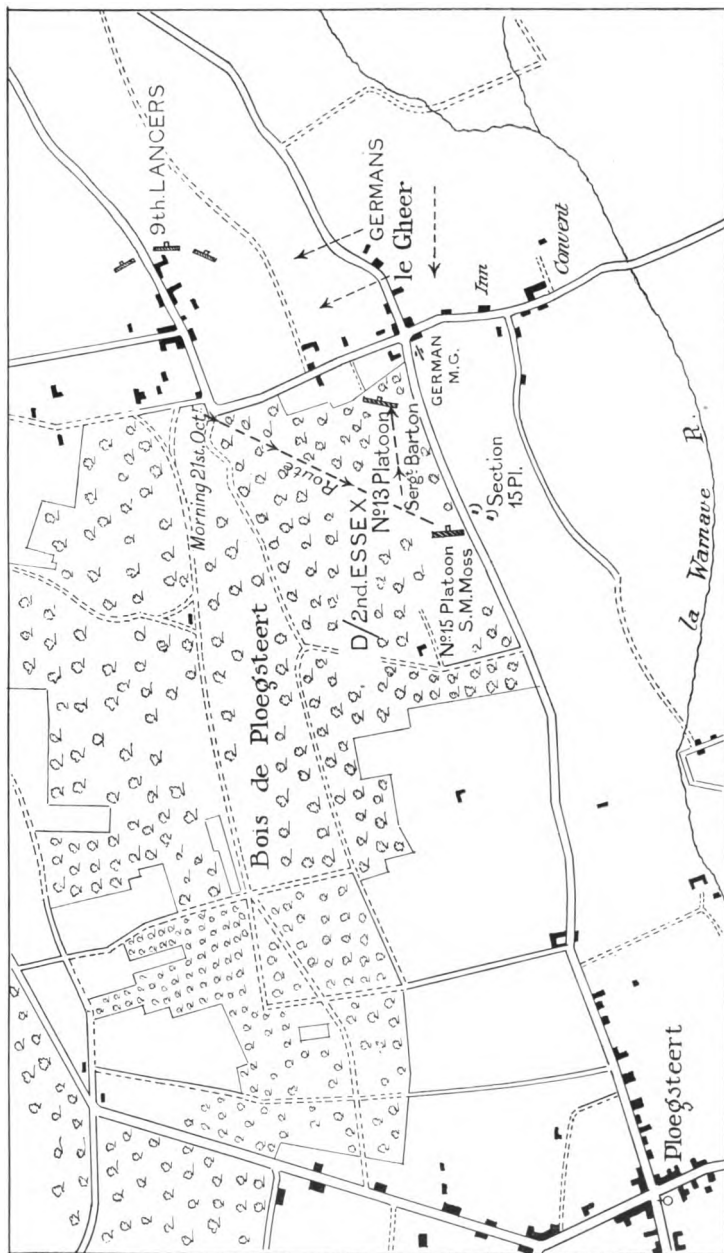
AIDING 9th LANCERS IN RECAPTURE OF LE GHEER.

October 20th was a day of heavy and anxious fighting, for the enemy made some progress. Early in the morning the front of the 12th Brigade, equidistant between Armentières and Pérenchies—held by the Inniskillings, the King's Own and the Lancashire Fusiliers, with the Essex in the second line trenches—was pushed hard by the enemy. The advance posts were driven in and the Germans dug in some 500 yards from the Brigade line. The Pompadours, in support, were quickly distributed; "C" Company at 8.30 a.m. was sent to the Château, and "D" Company, an hour later, to a farm a little distance north of River Warnave to support the King's Own and the Lancashire Fusiliers. At 4 p.m. "A" and "B" Companies followed "C" Company to the Château and they became temporarily attached to the 11th Brigade for the purpose of holding Hill 63, at the north-west corner of Ploegsteert Wood, and thus securing the left flank of the III Corps. "D" Company, under Major Moffitt, had an anxious time near the Warnave and about 5.30 p.m. that officer also hurried in support of the 11th Brigade.

In the morning mist part of the German XIX Corps, at 5.15 on October 21st, attacked the front of the 12th Brigade and forced back the battalion on the left for the distance of a quarter of a mile, which enabled them to occupy Le Gheer. Not only was the safety of the Brigade seriously imperilled, but the Cavalry Corps, whose line ran northwards from St. Yves to Messines, was also menaced. Brig.-General Anley, in these circumstances, ordered a counter-attack, having at his disposal for that purpose two platoons of the Essex ("D"), with two companies of the

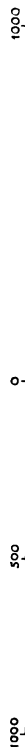
East Lancashires and the 1st Somersetshires, from the 11th Brigade. The operation took place at 9 a.m., supported by the divisional artillery from Hill 68 and two squadrons of the 9th Lancers on the left. The Germans were severely beaten, abandoning the cross-roads three-quarters of a mile north of Le Touquet (on the Lys opposite Frélinghien), suffering also heavy loss in casualties. There were 134 prisoners, whilst 45 men of the Inniskillings were released. The cross-roads were safely held for the rest of the day by the East Lancashires against enemy activity. The 12th Brigade's losses were heavy, numbering 468 officers and men, of whom the King's Own contributed 184.

The operation at Le Gheer, in which Nos. 13 and 15 Platoons of "D" Company were concerned, was a smart affair, and they earned considerable credit for the Pompadours. It will be remembered that the Company had been sent to reinforce the line about a couple of miles south-east of the village of Le Gheer, where, in the evening, General Butler decided to retain only two platoons, which were left under Lieut. Vance in support of another part of the line, whilst Major Moffitt, with the other two platoons, reported at Brigade headquarters in Ploegsteert. There he received orders to move to a road junction just north of Le Gheer to support the 9th Lancers. On arrival the men, tired out, for they had had no rest for several days, slept in some empty houses and at dawn dug themselves in along the edge of Ploegsteert Wood, where there was a small ditch. At 6 a.m. on the 21st October information came that the enemy appeared to be in possession of Le Gheer. There was no time for reconnaissance, and with the object of getting between Le Gheer and Ploegsteert and then working forward the platoons were doubled diagonally through the wood until they came out on the main road. Sergt. Barton took No. 13 Platoon through the wood to occupy a position facing Le Gheer. The sergeant effected a complete surprise, for, breaking out suddenly, he caught the enemy with enfilade fire as they lay by the roadside waiting for the situation to develop and effectively stayed the advance in that quarter for the time being. A section of No. 15 Platoon was sent to man disused artillery emplacements on the other side of the road. Major Moffitt, whilst ascertaining that the section had got into its proper position, was hit in the chest by a bullet, falling into a slight depression, with machine gun bullets flicking the mud all over him. A sergeant with him was also wounded. Sergeant Moss was ordered by the Major to take command, to report the situation to the Brigade by runner and to hold on at all costs. The last thing the company commander remembered was that the Sergeant-Major reported the enemy to be close on top of them. Major Moffitt told him to leave him and fall back on another position. The wounded officer had no further recollection of the time, but when he recovered consciousness he crawled into one of



D.H. Burles, del

Scale of Yards



The Combat of Le Gheer : Movements of Nos. 13 and 14 Platoons of "D" Company, Oct. 21st, 1914.

the trenches, where he lay in the wet for twelve hours until picked up by some of the Inniskillings when making the counter-attack. Happily the platoons were not forced to retire, for Captain North, the Brigade staff captain, who had been sent forward to act as guide to two companies of the East Lancashires, came up, and, taking No. 15 Platoon forward, joined Sergeant Barton and No. 13. Though both platoons lost heavily from enfilade machine gun fire, they were in the charge which recovered Le Gheer, No. 15 moving with the 9th Lancers and No. 13 with the East Lancashires. The Wood was cleared, the village occupied and the forward trench taken. The enemy charged No. 13 Platoon three times, but were driven off with heavy loss. Major Abadie, of the 9th Lancers, subsequently reported to Brig.-General Anley that the platoon with him had behaved magnificently.

Nos. 14 and 16 Platoons also saw hard fighting on the 21st. They were on the left flank of the King's Own, to the east of Le Gheer, in support. Lieut. J. Vance, who was in command, was killed whilst leading a section to an advanced position and 2nd Lieut. Pearce was taken prisoner when moving ahead to cover the advance of the remainder. Sergeant Stevenson and Sergeant Sharpley thus became platoon commanders and did good work under an officer of the King's Own, who took charge.

It was plucky and successful fighting, though not without severe casualties, for of "D" Company one officer was killed, one wounded and one taken prisoner, 66 other ranks being also killed, wounded and missing.

THE CLOSING DAYS.

The stirring events of October 21st, 1914, were not to close the participation of the 2nd Essex in the First Battle of Ypres. The next day the Battalion, having taken over from the 5th Dragoon Guards, was at Messines, under Lieut.-Colonel G. M. Tufnell, and repulsed an enemy attack in the early morning, which, however, had little heart in it. At 8 p.m. the same day another effort was made against them by means of mobile machine guns, the latter being fixed upon motor cars, but again the attempt was easily beaten off. "B" Company, under Captain Pechell, had about this time an exciting experience, when in divisional reserve. Orders were issued to rendezvous at Despierre Farm for a counter-attack, in which the company were to be employed with two of the King's Own and one of the Rifle Brigade. At the farm the three other companies were hurried off elsewhere and Captain Pechell was left on his own. He had orders not to embroil himself unless it was absolutely necessary, but after consultation with the staff captain of the 12th Brigade, he made up his mind to carry out the operation. The whole company was put into one line and the bluff attack succeeded owing to the fact that a relief of German troops was proceeding at the time and the Essex men were not spotted until within thirty

yards of the trenches. The enemy hastily evacuated the trenches at Despierre Farm cross-roads, which, filled with dead of both nations, were reoccupied, a half-hearted counter-attack being beaten off. In a small house at the corner were found three men (an officer, company sergeant-major and signaller), all dead, but with no marks on them. The house had been heavily shelled during the day.

On the 23rd, at 5.30 a.m., the trenches were handed over to 1st Connaught Rangers, of the 2nd Division, and the Essex men were marched to the north-west of Messines in support of the 1st Cavalry Division. Ere long another move was made and at 4.30 p.m. they left to rejoin the 12th Brigade at Le Bizet, the headquarters marching via Wulverghem. On arrival in the early evening, supplies were issued by the roadside, but there was little repose and at 7 p.m. the Battalion, with the rest of the Brigade, relieved the 17th Brigade of the 6th Division as far as the Rue du Bois, the 4th Division having a front of over eight miles. To add to the discomfort of an unpleasant position, the Essex were attacked as soon as they were established in the trenches, though happily without effect. For the next two days sniping and shelling caused several casualties, which made welcome the arrival of a draft of nearly a hundred men. The weather had turned wet and cold and on the night of October 26th there was much discomfort, for the trenches were full of water and mud, and to add to the misery there was some shelling by high explosive. Relief was effected by the Inniskillings the same evening and the Battalion went into reserve in Armentières. The Corps Commander had issued instructions for the trenches to be deepened and improved and went on to say that divisional commanders should withdraw as many men as possible from the front line to the support line and thus relieve the front line as frequently as possible; also to collect a strong divisional reserve outside the zone of the enemy's artillery fire and so obtain thorough rest for the men.

The 4th Division achieved considerable credit for its steadiness during these critical days and the official historians of the war wrote of it: "The Division was left with the impression that by straight shooting over the parapet, backed up by crossfire of artillery and flanking fire of machine guns, it could stop a German attack of almost any weight. The action of the divisional artillery, under Brig.-General G. F. Milne, was extraordinarily effective and arrangements were made by which it was possible to switch nearly the whole of it on to any sector that was menaced, except that near Le Gheer, where the high trees of Ploegsteert Wood gave protection to the enemy. The guns were kept under divisional control, but the infantry brigades had a call on particular batteries in case of need."

TAKEN FOR A GHOST !

Whilst in this sector Captain Pechell had a curious experience.

His company were in a noisy part of the line in an advanced mushroom trench, which was reached by crawling on the stomach. When the company commander was away on one of his trips his dug-out was blown up, and when he crept back about thirty minutes later he found a large party digging for him, who for a moment took his living self for his ghost! His watch was recovered unbroken and still going, although buried under a heavy mound of earth.

NEAR ARMENTIÈRES.

Long rest was not to be had for the Essex, for at 6 a.m. on October 27th the order came to stand to arms, there being heavy artillery fire. In the afternoon "A" and "B" Companies moved to the cross-roads at La Chapelle d'Armentières—the former for outpost duty and in the second line of trenches and "B," in support, the latter also providing a working party. There was much tension during the night owing to enemy activity, and then at 6 p.m. on the 28th Essex relieved the Inniskillings in the trenches about 1,000 yards south of Pont Egal farm railway crossing.

Although the enemy's snipers were active all day on the 29th, little damage was done, the casualties comprising one killed and two wounded. The Battalion should have been relieved by the Inniskillings the next day, but the latter had to be hurried to the support of the 11th Brigade. In the early morning of October 31st the enemy attacked, but the movement had no heart in it and was repulsed without loss.

The closing days of the Battle of Ypres constituted a period of great anxiety to the III Corps on account of the extended front, absence of reserves and the exhaustion of the troops. They also brought very heavy shelling for the Essex, who suffered several casualties. On November 1st the snipers were very active and there was gun-fire on the forward trenches. One shell pitched into a party of "A" Company, killing three and wounding one, whilst two others were killed and two wounded, but on the 3rd the artillery was quiet, although the same number of casualties occurred. November 4th was a day of much enemy effort. In the morning, during a thick fog, the Germans sought to effect an entry into the line held by "D" Company by the side of the railway track, but it was repulsed with ease. Then "A" Company's trenches received attention, being considerably damaged by shell-fire, though, happily, without injury to the garrison. At 7.40 p.m. came welcome relief by the Leinsters, thence into billets at La Chapelle d'Armentières. Whilst there General Anley's horse was killed, the groom suddenly finding himself on the ground with the bridle only and the head of the horse on the telegraph wires. A day's rest and on the evening of the 6th the King's Own handed over their line running from the Lille—Chapelle d'Armentières road to a point 400 yards north of Rue du Bois. The casualties were slight during this tour of duty, but the Germans were active and

constant firing was heard in the direction of Ploegsteert and Messines. November 11th, the day upon which the famous attack by the Prussian Guard was repulsed near Ypres, closed in this sector with considerable fighting. The night was dark, the wind blowing at hurricane strength and the rain constantly pouring down. During the height of the storm the Germans attacked the Rue du Bois, accompanied by much shelling, which set several farms alight, the wildness of the night thus being lit by blazing homesteads. There was an enemy effort on the left of the Battalion, but it was repulsed at a cost of two killed and 12 wounded, though machine guns and rifles jammed owing to the mud and rain. Shrapnel and high explosive were fired upon the Essex at 8 p.m. during the next two days, and then came relief by the Leinsters. Yet it was a change of scene and not rest that was intended, for by the evening of the same day, 14th, the Battalion was in trenches formerly occupied by the Hampshires, running from Le Gheer cross roads to the River Warnave—ground with which it was already familiar. A draft of 130 arrived on November 15th. Shelling caused eleven casualties (three killed) on the 16th and 17th, and on the 18th "A" Company, in reserve at the edge of Ploegsteert Wood, were somewhat severely troubled, for they lost six killed and 14 wounded. On the same day (20th) that the East Lancashires relieved the Essex, the latter took over from the Inniskillings upon a line from Warnave level crossing to the neighbourhood of Le Touquet. The trenches in this sector were in poor condition, with practically no communication ways. Six casualties marked the last day of the First Battle of Ypres.

On November 22nd a company of the 2nd Monmouths was attached for instructional purposes. Captain A. H. P. Rose was killed on this day, just a week after reporting for duty, three others also being killed and nine wounded. The day was notable, because four platoons were sent to Nieppe for bathing, and this much appreciated innovation was described by one private as "just like a birthday after being up to the neck in mud and water." The whole Battalion was sent in parties of four platoons to Nieppe and the gigantic wash was completed by the 29th, a day which the Germans celebrated by firing 41 shells at a working party and doing no damage.

FLOODED TRENCHES.

There were almost daily casualties in the trenches. Relief by the 2nd Monmouths, who had completed their training with the Battalion and were incorporated in the Brigade, was most welcome after a prolonged spell of duty, the men moving out by platoons at intervals of a quarter of an hour, between 10 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., on December 3rd. Temporary billets were allotted at the south end of Ploegsteert and then rest was found that same evening in a brewery at the north end of Armentières, known as "Brasserie de la Lys." Four days later

the Essex were back in the trenches, which were full of water. An effort was made to clear the communication trench, but with little success, though a pump sent by the Royal Engineers later removed some of the water. It was under trying conditions that 100 yards of communication trench were dug on the 8th, and then trouble was reported on the right, where "A" Company were flooded out. The garrison were withdrawn to houses at daylight and another trench commenced in rear of the water-logged section. Rain poured in torrents all day. Continuous baling and pumping slightly improved the state of the trenches on the 9th, and then in the evening came an alarm, caused by heavy firing in front of Houplines, where the 19th Brigade and the 6th Division were lying. The rain ceased on the 10th, so that conditions improved and by next day slight frost had appeared. At 10 a.m. officers and men of "A" and "D" Companies met a party of the 181st Regiment, 19th Saxon Corps, midway between the trenches, and the latter stated, in the expressive language of the War Diary, that they were "fed up." Their trenches appeared to be held in about the same strength as those of the Essex and were in a similar state. By 8 p.m. on December 11th the Battalion had been succeeded by 2nd Monmouths and the men were in billets at Le Bizet. Hot water baths were enjoyed during this brief spell, though one evening the supply of hot water failed and there was much disappointment. The next period in the trenches was marked by preparation for an attack by the 11th Infantry Brigade between Le Gheer and St. Yves, which was delivered on December 19th. A draft of 64 also arrived, but as an illustration of how quickly men were used up in this type of warfare, during the five days in which the Essex were in trenches upon this occasion—a period of comparative inactivity—they lost twenty men, of whom six were killed, apart from the sick.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS DAY.

The evening of the first Christmas Day of the war was spent in the trenches, the record briefly stating: "4.45 p.m.—Commenced relieving 2nd Monmouths in trenches; relief finished 8.30 p.m.; quiet day; very little sniping; hard frost; casualties nil." Rain came again on Boxing Day and the 27th was wet and cold, with a gale the next day, during which a sandbag barricade across the road was nearly completed. The closing days of the month were full of incident, with occasional heavy artillery fire in the direction of Messines. On December 29th an enemy shell hit a house in which the Maxim gun section was placed, killing three and wounding five. The following day the Essex went into billets, but on the last day of the old year "B" Company had to turn out in a hurry in the early morning to construct new trenches in rear of front line, which were being rendered untenable by flooding. Later it was found unnecessary to abandon the original trenches.

It was about this time that an officer of the Essex had an unpleasant experience. He was conducting two senior officers of another battalion round the trenches and had just left them for a moment to speak to a working party, when one of them struck a match and lit a cigarette. The officer rushed forward to make him put it out, but unfortunately there was a disused latrine in the way and into it he went up to his waist. He hurried back to headquarters and tried to get in, but the adjutant, scenting him, refused admittance and told him to go and sleep in a shed outside. In the morning he found he had been reposing in the mortuary with a corpse. That day, having no trousers to put on, he spent the daylight hours as a Highlander, tied up in an army blanket.

The enemy offensive having died down, the war resolved itself into the long and stern trial of the trenches, which was not to be broken for four years. There were still hopes of being able to restore the war of movement and Sir John French had plans for an operation which was to return Zeebrugge to our hands and prevent its utilization as a submarine base. Nothing came of it and so the British Army clung to the ground they had won and prepared with confidence for the Spring. Their spirit soared high, although "a dripping winter and the presence of a million men churned West Flanders into a gigantic mudhole."

TRENCH LIFE NEAR LE BIZET.

January, 1915, opened with the Battalion still in the neighbourhood of Le Bizet, suffering much hardship and discomfort. The weather remained wet and stormy and great difficulty was experienced for some weeks in maintaining the trenches because of flooding. New Year Day was celebrated by the Germans scoring many hits upon Brigade headquarters. On January 2nd 2nd Monmouths were relieved in the front line and four days later there was a readjustment of responsibility. The Monmouths took over "A" Company's trenches on the right and twenty-four hours later London Rifle Brigade were doing duty in "B" Company's positions north of the cross-roads, "C" Company remaining on the left of the line. There were daily casualties in the rain and cold, and on the 9th the water rose to such a height that "C" Company had temporarily to occupy the high command parapet along the greater portion of the frontage. Lieut.-Colonel Tufnell, who had commanded the Battalion since Lieut.-Colonel Anley had become brigadier of the 12th Brigade, went to hospital on the 11th and was succeeded by Captain Ryan, but only for two days, for upon the latter officer proceeding to Rouen Captain L. O. W. Jones took command and remained in that position during the strenuous fighting of the Second Battle of Ypres, at which the Battalion more than maintained its previous reputation for brave and steadfast service. The enemy saluted the headquarters

on January 18th with 6in. howitzers, searching for guns. During this period there was fierce fighting near Soissons and as far east as Alsace and doubtless the enemy was desirous of preventing, if possible, the preparations for an offensive on the west, which, however, came early in March with the attack on Neuve Chapelle. On January 14th there was more shelling and a woman, who had clung to her cottage 100 yards from the front line, was blown to pieces. The system had been tried of relieving companies every two days in the trenches, but on the 15th the previous tour of four days was re-established at the desire of the men. Relief from trench troubles was sought on January 16th, when the opening meet was held of the 4th Division hounds at Nieppe. For the rest of the month there was much activity by enemy snipers. Constant repair of trenches was needed, and, in addition, construction was commenced of a second line. A draft of 75 men joined on the 25th, and the Battalion machine gun establishment was increased by a couple of guns, which arrived on the 29th. Upon the last day of the month information was received that part of the 11th Brigade trenches had been lost and the Battalion stood to arms, but fortunately the news was not true, though there was heavy fire on the left, about Ploegsteert Wood, where the 11th were lying. The casualties for the month were 19 killed and 82 wounded.

The month of February was marked by sharp fighting along parts of the line, where both forces were searching for the weak places. A draft of 40 men reported on the 1st and the next day the enemy's snipers found the range of a spot in the second line, "rendering it unpleasant to work there, also making the road alongside unhealthy." Field guns also joined in the fray and several hits were obtained by the Germans, though the damage sustained was confined to a couple of sandbags. There was report on the 4th that the enemy were using trench mortars, but they were ascertained to be rifle grenades, and there was immediate reply in kind. The duel went on with considerable intensity two days later. A grenade fell into a yard and wounded 2nd Lieut. Blest and two machine gunners, whilst a working party of the Essex in the third line was heavily shelled, but as the Germans were some time getting the range they were enabled to withdraw without loss. The enemy still pressed and on the 7th dug a new loop-shaped trench within 25 yards of the British line, into which they fixed sniping plates, from which they fired continually. Lieut. P. A. Christy was killed by a sniper on the 9th whilst superintending the drainage of the trench, in which employment he had been very successful. Some excitement was caused by the report on the 11th that sounds of mining had been heard, but the miners from the Monmouths declared there was no foundation therefor. The next day work had to be stopped at night on the new trenches because of the firing and the number of flares. A message was received from the French IX Corps that Alsatian prisoners had

stated there would be a general attack on the 15th or 16th, but beyond artillery fire nothing of importance happened. For February 17th there is the note, "Quite a quiet day. At one time the Germans shelled the usual potato patch in the field behind Battalion headquarters, and our artillery replied." The following day the enemy were searching for the British battery operating at Grande Rabèque farm, but could not find it. On February 24th a company of the 5th Western Canadians was attached for the day, followed by another company on the 25th. A curious casualty occurred when 2nd Lieut. Round was wounded on the 26th by two bullets simultaneously, one in each arm. An aeroplane, drifting low over the enemy lines, had difficulty in getting back owing to the high wind. The Germans fired at it, but the British field guns immediately joined in and the aviator was enabled to retire safely. The end of the month came with the Battalion in support, having been relieved in the trenches by the 2nd Monmouths. The casualties during February were 13 killed and 51 wounded.

Back again in the front line by March 4th, Essex on the next day experienced shelling by "Little Willies"—some of which were "duds"—and a few "White Hopes" at Ploegsteert. A company of the 5th Leicesters was attached for instruction. On March 12th the Monmouths were relieved and the Battalion again took over the trenches of the London Rifle Brigade. The battle of Neuve Chapelle opened on the 10th and that of St. Eloi on the 14th, but the unit was not concerned. Lieut. R. H. J. Johnson was killed on March 13th and until the 2nd Monmouths occupied the trenches once more on the 16th, there was little but occasional shelling to record. When the Essex went into the line again on the 20th they not only took over from the Monmouths, but also trenches north of Warnave from the 4th Rifle Brigade and Hampshires. Two companies of the Royal Irish were attached to reinforce the personnel required for the extended frontage. There had been a cessation of the intense shelling and sniping, probably caused by the heavy fighting elsewhere, and the Battalion record narrates a series of quiet days until the 31st. A "Little Willie" set two haystacks on fire on March 22nd and relief by the Monmouths was varied by attachment of a company of 4th Leicesters for training. The casualties for March were 15 killed and 37 wounded.

April, which was to close in a storm of fighting, opened without much incident. On the 5th houses at the back of "A" Company billets were shelled, and two cows were slightly wounded. The days were wet, with desultory gun-fire. Captain Pechell put a bridge over the Warnave on the 7th, and the Battalion suffered a severe loss the next day in the death of Major G. C. Binsteed, who was killed whilst looking out of the observation hole half-way up the back wall of Central Farm. He was a most promising officer,

who had done excellent work during the retreat to the Marne. The Essex exploded a mine on the 9th near the German barricade at Le Touquet, and ere the Monmouths relieved them they had completed the left communication trench and linked up with the London Rifle Brigade. By the 13th the Battalion was again in the trenches, having marched up in daylight for the first time since the original communication trenches were flooded. Artillery aimed a few shells at a party of Germans who had been observed digging in a shallow trench behind their front line. This was on the 15th and the next day the Germans retorted by sending over 30 grenades, which caused ten casualties—three killed and seven wounded. The Battalion was in and out of the trenches with the Monmouths until the 27th. The King's Own exploded a mine north of Le Touquet on the 22nd and the Germans replied with 48 5.9 rounds on the railway barricade held by the King's Own, on the Essex right, following up the shelling later by bombarding Le Bizet Church. Whilst in billets orders were received to move to the Ypres area and ere long the Battalion was once again in the thick of the fighting, for the Second Battle of Ypres was by then being fiercely waged.



SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES.

This struggle lasted from April 22nd to May 18th, the effort of the Duke of Wurtemberg's Fourth Army being to capture the last important town in Belgium held by the Allies, with its vital series of communications by road and rail. The British Army had for some weeks previously gradually relieved the French in their sector of defence. As a result of the offensive the area occupied by the British to the north of the city was considerably restricted, but neither then nor at any subsequent period of the war was the enemy allowed to set his foot inside this City of the Salient. "When viewed as a whole the defence of the Ypres Salient during April and May, 1915, stands out as a splendid achievement. Many battalions were in the front trenches for three weeks and more on end, without any relief, constantly shelled, subjected to repeated onslaughts at a fearful disadvantage in having to face gas attacks with only the most inadequate and improvised protection."¹

The struggle commenced with the British seizure on April 17th of Hill 60, a heap of earth left from the cutting of the Ypres-Lille railway. The Germans tried desperately to retake it and then suddenly, on the pleasant Spring night of April 22nd, the first gas attack was loosed upon the French African troops lying between the Ypres-Poelcapelle road to the Ypres-Yser canal. The effect of this new and terrible instrument of war was to drive back the soldiers "blind and coughing and wild with terror." A gap of four miles was opened between the Canadians on the right and the French on the left at Boesinghe. For a time the situation was grave, but the Canadians fought staunchly and with great gallantry, and the gap was filled the next day by a small force, under Colonel Geddes. Troops were hurried up—4th Division among them—and the danger was relieved after desperate fighting. The 10th Brigade was in position by the 25th, but the end of the month was at hand before the Division was completely arrayed. The larger portion of the 12th Brigade, which included the 2nd Essex, was on the move from Le Bizet on the afternoon of the 28th, marching through Armentières and Nieppe to Bailleul, where it was billeted in the open country. By 12.15 p.m. on April 30th, the Pompadours were at huts within a quarter of a mile of Ouderdom, coming under high explosive shell-fire. The Battalion was ordered to relieve the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and Queen Victoria's Rifles. The 12th Brigade was to take over the extreme left sector of the British trenches to the left

1. "Encyclopædia Britannica," p. 1103, Vol. 32.

of Vanheule (Shelltrap or Mousetrap) Farm, lying north of Wieltje. Lancashire Fusiliers, the King's Own and the Essex were in the front line, with a battalion in support. The 10th Brigade was between Shelltrap Farm and Fortuin and the 11th to the right of it, where the line turned due north. Frequent checks were created by transport blocking the roads, all under heavy fire, which caused twenty casualties to the Battalion, Lieut. R. Pierson being among the killed. During the evening the Essex men went into the trenches, holding the left of the British line, for upon their left was a French Moroccan brigade. The first line was 900 yards in front of the support line and 1,500 yards from the reserve company, with French, Ghurkas and British troops scattered in between. Late at night they were warned that the Sirhind Brigade might attack next day and would be assembled in the Essex trenches prior to the assault, the wire having to be cut by 8 p.m. on May 1st. It was expected that the Essex would occupy the captured trenches if required, but the General commanding the Sirhind Brigade did not think they would be needed. And he was right, for the attack was not pressed. No advance was made beyond the trenches, owing to the fire of 11in. howitzers from Houthulst Forest, which had spent the whole day searching for the Essex, but, happily, did not get nearer to them than fifty yards. The Pompadours suffered somewhat heavily from shell-fire, for they had 15 killed and 14 wounded, 2nd Lieut. P. J. Barrell being killed by a sniper.

FIRST GAS ATTACK AGAINST THE 2nd ESSEX.

A greater trial came next day, May 2nd, for the Germans used gas for the third time, in this instance against the French on the left and the 4th Division on their right, which, if successful, would have sealed the fate of Ypres and of British troops along Broodseinde Ridge and in Polygon Wood. The Division stood firm, however, as on many another occasion in that month's awful ordeal, for the 4th earned a great reputation in the Salient.

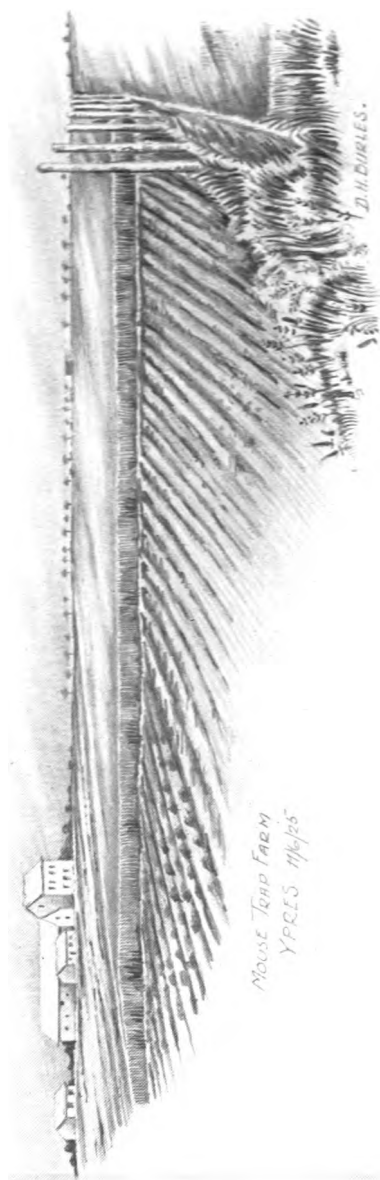
Chlorine gas, which was the first used by the Germans, was very painful in its effects and the scenes which were witnessed on the Western Front during the early days of its employment did much to embitter feeling in the British nation. It attacked the respiratory tracts and by coming in contact with moisture formed hydrochloric acid, which destroyed the tissues. Vomiting and diarrhoea were also caused, and in cases where men were seized by a high concentration immediate death occurred through spasm of the glottis. An antidote was soon found in mouthpads made of flannel or wool, soaked in hyposulphite of soda, and these were in use by the troops against whom the attack of May 2nd was launched.

At 5 o'clock on that Sunday evening a thick wall of gas, greenish yellow in colour, some 60ft. or 70ft. high, was observed creeping along the front of the trenches held by the 12th Brigade, the concen-

tration being thickest on the right, where the Lancashire Fusiliers were stationed, and on the left, where the Essex were smitten on both flanks. The King's Own, in the centre, were not so severely affected. "B" and "D" Companies and a platoon of "A" Company were holding the Battalion's front system. The men stood to and were told to remain whatever happened, but, almost simultaneously, the cloud broke upon the Pompadours. In spite of respirators, they were driven from the line by the suffocating fumes. "The gases were absolutely overpowering; officers and men seemed to lose their senses, most of them getting out of the trenches and reeling to the rear." Captain Pechell and 12 N.C.O's. and men of "B" Company would not withdraw and with great bravery held on until the trenches were reoccupied. They armed themselves with what rifles they could find and tried to get the machine gun into action, but discovered the team had taken the locks when they evacuated the trench. The names of this gallant party are happily preserved and deserve to be remembered :

C.S.M. Tipler (killed).
 C.Q.M.S. Turl.
 Sergeant Cumbers.
 Sergeant Barker.
 Pte. Brown.
 Pte. Maynard.
 Pte. Howes.
 Pte. Read.
 Pte. Curtis.
 Pte. Finch.
 Pte. Scrutton ("A" Company.)
 Pte. Briggs.

Lieut. Irwin, with soldierly presence of mind, rushed the right support, consisting of three platoons of "A" Company, and stationed some 400 yards in the rear, through a heavy shrapnel-fire and gas-laden atmosphere, reoccupying the right end of the trench. "C" Company, under Lieut. Atkinson, also moved up from reserve, 1,500 yards back, and, in face of artillery and machine guns, reoccupied the left centre. Splendid aid was received from the French and British artillery, particularly a battery of French 75s, whose fire on the enemy's trenches prevented them from moving forward. The King's Own were pushed forward into some ruined farm buildings, whence they enfiladed an attempt to enter the trenches of the Lancashire Fusiliers, who had also suffered severely. The South Lancashires subsequently took over the Fusiliers' position and French infantry closed to the right and thickened the Essex line, whilst a company of the Monmouths was later moved up in support. After the line was re-established the enemy made two attempts against the Essex right, but were driven back each time. A hostile aeroplane



Mousetrap or Shelltrap Farm, near Wielij, Ypres. It was this position which the Battalion recaptured on May 13th, 1915.

also came over, flying low, and was brought down by the Battalion, but fell just within the German lines. During the night the enemy effort died away. Losses were heavy in the 12th Brigade and the Essex had 265 casualties—23 killed, 67 wounded (six officers) and 175 missing (two officers). Of the last-named a large number were subsequently found to have been “gassed” and admitted to hospital. Next day the 10th and 12th Brigades were deservedly congratulated by the Commander-in-Chief for their sterling work.

A GREAT DAY FOR THE POMPADOURS : SAVING THE LINE.

The enemy offensive had seriously imperilled the safety of the extended line and it was determined to withdraw to positions within three miles of Ypres more easily held by the troops at disposal—from Langemarck road to Shelltrap Farm, thence by Frezenberg ridge and in a southerly direction to Zillebeke Ridge and Hill 60, Bellewaarde Lake and Hooze being included in the British sphere. The front was thus reduced from six miles to three, and of the three divisions holding it, 4th Division was on the left, from Shelltrap Farm to the French zone west of Langemarck road. The withdrawal was a critical operation, for at places the Germans were within ten yards of the British trenches, but it was so skilfully conducted that the wounded were all evacuated, with the greater proportion of the supplies and ammunition, that which was not removable being buried. The 12th Brigade on the extreme left did not move, but was the pivot upon which the British divisions on the right swung back towards Zillebeke. The actual withdrawal, begun on the night of May 2nd-3rd and completed on May 4th, was unmolested in its final stages by the Germans, whose one substantial success was the recovery of Hill 60, recaptured on May 5th by a renewed gas attack.

In the early hours of the last day of the withdrawal the Essex were heavily bombarded by the Germans, but there was no attack. They were replied to by our artillery, special mention being made in the Battalion record of a battery which shelled some houses and a trench on the right from which enemy snipers had been active. The observation work in this admirably successful bombardment was done by Lieut. Atkinson, of “C” Company. May 5th was the day of the recapture of Hill 60 by the enemy and the Battalion had some evidence of the weapon used, for between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. a smell of gas was detected and a white cloud like a fog observed, being probably decomposed gas used in that attack. Early on May 7th a shell struck the reserve ammunition belonging to the Monmouths and burnt it, and orders were given to the Essex to send up supplies and also to acquaint the Royal Irish with the situation. All available orderlies and headquarters party, sixteen in number, were promptly despatched

with twelve bandoliers each. May 8th was marked by heavy fighting on the right of the 4th Division, where the line held by the 28th Division was pushed back west of Frezenberg Ridge. The Essex experienced a bombardment which was kept up for over eight hours, lasting from breakfast-time until well into the afternoon. It was fierce throughout the day, but terrific between 7.10 a.m. and 9.10 a.m. No attack was made on 12th Brigade, but it was a very anxious time, for news came that the brigade on the right had been broken. Happily the report was not wholly true, for although parties of Germans got into Wieltje, they were counter-attacked and driven out. During the morning a score or more of the enemy attempted a raid on "A" Company's front, but they were all accounted for as soon as they left their trenches. The casualties in the Brigade, although not seriously engaged, were very heavy, numbering 920, and almost entirely due to high explosive shell. Brigadier-General Anley wrote: "The Germans seemed to rely solely on hammering their way through with heavy artillery. Although most of the men who were not wounded were dazed and bruised through being constantly buried, their fighting spirit did not appear to deteriorate. I heard of no men straggling to the rear. Each time the enemy's infantry tried to advance the men cheered and shouted to them to come on."

The Battalion record for May 9th gives a graphic idea of the unit's experiences at this time:—

Fairly quiet morning. Report that French on our left would attack at 2 p.m.

1.40 p.m.—French bombard Germans on our left.

2.35 p.m.—Germans began to bombard all along our front and to the right with heavy guns and high explosive.

3.35 p.m.—A lull in the bombardment, but no attack.

4 p.m.—Rifle-fire to the east.

5 p.m.—French again bombarded German trenches. German bombardment died down.

9.40 p.m.—Received orders that we were to be relieved by Somersetshire Light Infantry and go into reserve trenches at La Brique. A trench mortar station in "A" Company's field fired a bomb to-day into a cottage opposite the trench and exploded a cylinder of asphyxiating gas.

May 10th.—2.3 a.m.—Battalion settled in bivouacs in reserve trenches.

The same night the Essex relieved the Hampshires in the divisional support trench near Wieltje on a frontage of 800 yards, the task being completed by midnight. The two following days were quiet, but May 13th was a great day for the 2nd Essex—the day when it restored the line by a gallant and timely charge and received the warmest congratulations of all the generals concerned. It was a glorious day for Essex altogether, for in the same fight the

Essex Yeomanry made their first spirited attack near Verlorenhoek. The Germans had made some progress on the right between May 8th and 18th, and on the last-named day they delivered a particularly heavy attack upon the Salient. The line had to be readjusted some distance in the rear, though "in front of Wieltje the 4th Division held firm and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, retaking such portions of the line as the Germans had temporarily captured." Shelltrap Farm lies between the Poelcappelle and Langemarck roads at the point where they begin to run together ere entering Ypres as one main thoroughfare. In the rear to the right is Wieltje and had the troops given way in this quarter there was only the Yser Canal, in line with Ypres, to bar the enemy's advance. Happily, though this vital point in the line of the 4th Division was obstinately contested all day long, it remained in British hands at the end, and the left flank of the Salient was safe. Now for the part played by the 2nd Essex.

At 4 a.m., on a day of cold north winds and dismal rain, the Germans started battering the front line from Shelltrap Farm southwards, and at 5.30 dismounted cavalry were noticed retiring on the right, where the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions had suffered terribly. There was a lull in the bombardment for a quarter of an hour and then it commenced again. Shelltrap, or Mousetrapp, Farm was held by an infantry company and, situated upon a slight elevation, was easily visible from Wieltje. It was a substantial structure, surrounded by a moat, and its retention was important because it afforded excellent observation to the north, the green fields far into the distance being dotted with the red roofs of farmhouses. Just before 7 a.m. a body of men was seen retiring from the ridge about 100 yards south—evidence that the Farm itself had probably fallen to the enemy. Lt.-Col. L. O. W. Jones, observing this, on his own initiative ordered Lieut. J. V. Atkinson, commanding "C" Company, to push on to the Farm and reinforce it or, if it were in German hands, to retake it, "A" Company taking the place of "C" Company in the support trench. Five minutes later (7.5 a.m.) the latter Company moved off, but when the leading sections reached the ridge the Farm was found to be held by the Germans. The Company attacked in good order under heavy artillery and rifle fire, but were held up by a moat round the farm buildings into which several men fell. A machine gun was ably handled by Sergeant Couzens and aided by its fire the Company drove the enemy out, Lieut. Atkinson being wounded. Thus Shelltrap Farm was regained.

At 8.20 a.m. G.O.C. 11th Brigade, to which the Essex had been temporarily attached, issued the following order to the Essex: "Retake at once front line from Shelltrap Farm to Fortuin-Wieltje road, a frontage of 1,000 yards." Units of 1st Cavalry Division had been driven in. The farmhouse being already in

the hands of "C" Company, the three remaining Companies were disposed for the counter-attack as follow: "A" Company (Lieut. Irwin) to retake trenches between Fortuin-Wieltje and St. Julien-Wieltje roads, with its left on road junction 500 yards north-east of the point where they joined. "B" Company (Captain Pechell) were ordered to prolong the line to the left with their right on the road junction just mentioned. "D" Company (Lieut. Smith-Masters) had to sideslip up the support trench to the position vacated by "B" Company, and follow them up as reserve, the intention being that when "B" and "A" Companies had retaken the trenches "D" should turn half-left and secure the remainder of the trench to the left of "B" Company, having the assistance of that Company on the right and of "C" Company on the left from Shelltrap Farm.

Within ten minutes (8.30 a.m.) "A" and "B" Companies moved forward, the attack being splendidly carried out in quick time and marked by great dash and determination. Subjected to shrapnel and high explosive shell-fire, they reached the ridge, when heavy machine gun fire swept them, but they never faltered. Within 300 yards of the objective the men charged at the double, but when they arrived the trench was found to be almost obliterated by shell-fire and only capable of use in places. "B" Company included a large draft, newly arrived, and they suffered considerable casualties through bunching. Captain Pechell went down with a piece of high explosive shell through the arm, and acting C.S.M. Cumbers was killed by a similar missile. Later in the day, when the company commander crawled back, he had the satisfaction of hearing that Lieut. N. B. Bavin and 60 men of the Company had accomplished their mission. The counter-attack of the Essex was carried out in full view of the London Rifle Brigade, who stood up in their trenches to cheer as the Pompadours swept forward.

Touch was obtained with the East Lancashires holding the ridge on the left of "B" Company, and "D" Company, coming up in support of their comrades, dug-in at their rear, making expert use of numerous shell holes. In less than two hours from the delivery of the attack the Battalion had settled down and was busily engaged in clearing the portions which had been blocked. The Battalion was relieved by the King's Own on the right and the reserve company of the East Lancashires at Shelltrap Farm and then withdrew to its original position, the divisional support trench, where companies and sections were reorganized after having been mixed up in the attack. Arriving wet and cold, the men had the disappointing experience of finding packs and great coats ransacked and many articles taken. The casualties were 37 killed, 94 wounded and 49 missing, a total of 180.

The following messages were received on the evening of May 18th or during the next day :—

From G.O.C. 4th Division : " General de Lisle, commanding 1st Cavalry Division, wishes to convey his thanks to the Essex Regiment for their gallant and prompt assistance this morning. The Cavalry Division's opinion is voiced by the whole of the 4th Division."

11th Brigade report on the situation : " Yesterday attacks were made on Hampshires and Rifle Brigade, both being beaten off. Left company East Lancashires shelled to pieces and Shell-trap Farm taken. Counter-attack by Essex restored the situation and Essex also retook trenches on our right vacated by cavalry."

Brigadier, 12th Brigade (Brigadier-General Anley) to Commanding Officer (Lieut.-Colonel L. O. W. Jones).—"Just a line to tell you how delighted I am that the old corps have done so splendidly ; everybody is talking about it."

Brigadier, 11th Brigade, to Commanding Officer : " Before handing over to G.O.C. 12th Brigade, I want to express to you my great appreciation of the splendid work done by you and my old friends the Essex Regiment. They saved the line twice."

It was to this period of command probably that an artillery officer referred when he wrote home : " I heard a splendid story this morning from a General. The 4th Division is simply splendid, and they say the best Battalion in it is the 2nd Essex. This Battalion has been commanded for months by a young Captain, who was Adjutant ; his second-in-command has four years' service and the present Adjutant a few months' service. They say they never give ground and will remain in the trenches under the fire of the German big guns to the last man. The other day a regiment who were in the trenches on their right broke before a heavy shell-fire. A company of the Essex went forward to occupy the vacated trench. This they did and remained there until only one officer and three men were left. These four ran from one part of the trench to another, maintaining a rapid fire all the time, thus deceiving the Germans as to their numbers by their determination and resource. They kept off 200 Germans who were attacking them. Was it not too glorious for words ? They say the men of the Regiment jump on to the parapet of their trenches and challenge the Germans to come and fight it out."

PRAISE BY THE DIVISIONAL COMMANDER.

For a few days the Battalion had a quieter time. On the night of May 15th, 1915, it was relieved in the support line by two companies of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and marched to Vlamertinghe Château, arriving at 2 a.m. on the 17th and sleeping in the bushes within the grounds. The next day the Pompadours left to occupy billets in a farmhouse just north of Poperinghe on the Woesten Road, where a draft of 35 joined. In the afternoon of May 18th Major-General Sir H. F. M. Wilson, K.C.B., commanding 4th Division, paid a visit and congratulated the Battalion on its behaviour. It had done good work all through the war, but

had surpassed itself during the trials of the previous fortnight. On May 21st a company of the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (one platoon to each company) was attached for instructional purposes. The respite ended the next day, for at 10 a.m. the men were marching to Vlamertinghe Château, where they rested for the afternoon. In the evening, during a heavy thunderstorm, the East Lancashires were relieved on the extreme left of the British line, at the point of junction with the French. Lieut. N. B. Bavin was killed on the 23rd, which was described as a "very quiet day," but a different story was told of the 24th.

ANOTHER GAS ATTACK.

The Germans suddenly opened a severe bombardment upon the five miles front from Menin road northward. Favoured by the fine, clear day and a light north-easterly breeze, they discharged gas with such success that they walked into Hooze, Shelltrap Farm and Bellewaarde Ridge, but they were stayed from penetrating beyond the front line, 1st Cavalry Division playing a notable part just south of Hooze. A counter-attack next day by the 27th and 28th Divisions failed to recover the lost ground. The 4th Division on the left suffered considerably in this last combat of the Second Battle of Ypres, but for the most part stood firm, though in the centre it had to conform to a new line through Wieltje.

At 2.45 on the morning of May 24th the Essex noticed the Germans were releasing gas from a point opposite their trenches along the whole line to the right, accompanied by a heavy bombardment, in which a large number of gas shells were used, the rear of the trenches being specially treated to prevent reinforcement from the support line. Two or three units suffered so severely that some of the men retired past the Essex headquarters, the officer commanding (Lieut.-Colonel L. O. W. Jones) taking energetic steps to reorganize them. The bombardment slackened about 5 a.m. and report came through that Shelltrap Farm and the hedge on its left were in German hands. The Battalion was warned that it might have to retire on to the divisional support line in the evening, though later it was announced that there would be a counter-attack with three battalions, the French assisting on the left. Early in the afternoon there was a report that the enemy were pressing southward from Shelltrap Farm, but little authentic news could be gleaned until 5 p.m., when orders came to retire at dusk after the King's Own, through the South Lancashires, who were in divisional support and French Switch, to trenches behind the bank of the Yser canal, Shelltrap Farm having been retaken by the Germans. The instruction was altered later and the Canal was not crossed, for "A," "B" and "C" Companies were posted in the divisional second line and "D" Company held the divisional support line, the King's Own being in French Switch. The

movement was completed by 2 a.m. on the 25th. The casualties were severe, totalling 92 (16 killed, 55 wounded and 21 missing). On the 25th the remainder of French Switch was taken over and efforts made to destroy the trenches which had been vacated on the 24th. "A" Company moved out at dusk, covered by a bombing party, and filled in 200 yards of the old trench without interference, though Germans had been seen in the eastern end of it. "D" Company also started similar work round "Forward Cottages," again without interruption, the two parties being back before stand-to. May 27th was marked by an effort of "D" Company to capture a German at "Forward Cottages," but when they arrived he had hurriedly departed. The next day relief was effected and the Battalion was back at the Canal Bank, with the exception of "C" Company, which remained in the trenches on the left next to the French. The remaining days of the month brought no incident of note. The Second Battle of Ypres had died away, the tide of fighting flowing farther south towards Festubert and Lens.

The casualties for the month were abnormally heavy, showing the cost in personnel exacted by the use of gas and the increased weight of shell-fire. They totalled 655, made up as follows :—

Killed, 112.

Wounded, 298.

Missing, 250.

Of the last-named a great number were "gassed" and subsequently so reported from the hospitals.

The early days of June were spent in billets near Elverdinghe, an inspection being held by Major-General J. L. Keir, K.C.B., commander of VI Corps. The 56th were on the march again by the 6th, having to relieve French troops in the support trenches at the rear of Turco Farm. On the 10th the front line just ahead of Turco Farm was again reached, the relief of the King's Own being completed by 1.15 the next morning. Heavy rain had fallen and the march up the communication trench was very tedious and trying, the way being both muddy and narrow. The front line was not in much better condition and the 2nd Essex had to do a considerable amount of work ere there was a material improvement. Bombing patrols were taken out by 2nd Lieut. M. A. Chawner and 2nd Lieut. B. C. N. Willmott on the 12th, whilst two days later there is dry humour in the comment, "Fired a trench mortar in the evening, which resulted in drawing several 'Jack Johnsons,' so do not propose to use it again for the present."

"NO MAN'S COTTAGE" AND THE STORY OF ITS DEMOLITION.

The next day several Germans were observed working on their parapet at dawn during stand-to and they were promptly fired

upon. At night a covering party was provided to sappers who had orders to blow up a cottage lying in No Man's Land. Owing to the lie of the land the Germans could hold it more easily than the British troops, hence the operation. When the party arrived the Germans were found in possession. Shots and hand grenades were exchanged, but entry could not be effected and the sappers had to return. The attempts to destroy the cottage created quite a lot of humorous interest. Thus we read on May 16th: "Trench mortars were used to demolish No Man's Farm. Opening fire at 6.30 a.m., by 8 p.m. they had fired six rounds. Two rounds dropped short, two blind, one premature and one into the farm, throwing two shirts some considerable distance into the air." Then on May 17th: "Field howitzers opened fire at noon on the Farm. First seven rounds blind, next six just short or over." Again on the 18th: "The heavies tried to knock down 'No Man's Cottage,' starting at noon. The 125th Field Battery shot into it for some time. The heavies were the more successful and knocked several pieces out of it. At 5 p.m. the Germans suddenly started rapid fire for a few minutes, apparently merely out of hate, and their howitzers bombarded all the countryside." The end of "No Man's Cottage" is not told, for the next day Lancashire Fusiliers succeeded the Essex, though the latter were back again by the 23rd. "C" Company's trench in the salient in front of Turco Farm was heavily bombed by a trench mortar on the morning of the 26th, and they had to evacuate the position until it was repaired during the night. The enemy next day demolished most of the work of the night before, but this did not long trouble the Essex men, for they spent the remainder of the month in support. June's casualties comprised 18 killed and 68 wounded.

GENERAL CONGRATULATIONS.

Active preparations were proceeding through the summer for the offensive at Loos, but the 2nd Essex were not involved in that costly operation. Their work for the next few months was routine duty in the trenches, and the Battalion record has some interesting comments here and there upon their condition. July opened with some shelling, varied by mortar activity, but as the latter had a very small traverse the danger was countered without difficulty. Part of the trench bombarded was evacuated and covered by a machine gun. On July 5th a trench mortar fired three bombs into an estaminet, which was just within the British line, but without effect, and on the early morning of July 6th there was intense artillery fire upon the enemy lines, preparatory to an attack by the 11th Brigade. There was retaliation in the same form by the Germans next day. Orders came for a move, and by the evening of the 8th the Battalion was in billets near Proven. On July 14th General (later Lord) Plumer, commanding Second Army, inspected the 2nd Essex, and five days later

Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief, performed the same office to the 12th Brigade, particularly mentioning the way in which the Essex re-established their own line after the gas attack on May 2nd. On the 21st the Battalion entrained at Godewaersvelde and arrived at Doullens in the early morning of the 22nd, bivouacking at Freschevillers, to the south-east of Doullens, and later being in billets at Forceville. General G. C. Monro, then commanding the Third Army, inspected the Essex on the 24th, congratulating the men on their steadiness on parade and the good turn-out. This duty was preliminary to the relief of the 1st Battalion, 17th Regiment of Territorial French Infantry, in the front line, about 1,000 yards east of Auchonvillers. The British forces had taken over responsibility for a larger section of the front and thus the Battalion came to the Beaumont-Hamel area, where both the 1st and 2nd Battalions were to suffer much in the bloodstained days of the First Battles of the Somme.

TRENCH SYSTEMS.

Generous tribute was paid to the state in which the French Infantry left the trenches, the chalk subsoil being much less trying than the swamps of Ypres. They were extraordinarily clean and nearly all were floored with brick. A number of bomb-proof shelters had been constructed capable of holding from 25 to 30 men, roofed with tree trunks, with a covering of earth, 3ft. to 4ft. in thickness. The telephone system, too, was excellent, obviously laid out by trained electricians. Revetment was not necessary and what there was consisted of brushwood hurdles. Loop-holes dotted the front trench, but the top of the parapet was not quite thick enough. The wire was in good condition. Some half-dozen forward saps, 20 to 50 yards long, provided protection for the listening patrols, the German trenches being 200 to 500 yards away and at a lower level. Drainage—that constant preoccupation when in the Ypres sector—was arranged upon a twofold system. A deep sump pit was constructed at the side of the trenches and smaller soak pits dug into the floors and covered by wooden gratings. The system of drainage was not appreciated so warmly later on, for on August 11th a note in the diary states, "Trenches very wet and it is shown the large sump pits are going to be useless for draining in the winter, even though sunk down to the chalk." Communication trenches led right into Auchonvillers and up these ways the reserve company carried food to the front line, for no fires were lit there or cooking done.

A PENINSULAR MEMORY.

A pleasing incident occurred on the first day's occupation of the new site. On the right were the 62nd Regiment of French Infantry, and the Commandant paid a visit. On being told that the eagle worn on the uniform was captured from the 62nd at

Salamanca by the 2/44th Regiment of Foot, now 1st Battalion The Essex Regiment, he was much interested, as the French had never known by whom the trophy was captured. He at once pulled out his pocket-knife and cut a button off the officer's coat and said he would keep it as a souvenir.

Nothing of note happened for the remainder of July. There was a welcome decline in casualties, which numbered six killed and 28 wounded.

On August 2nd the Essex were relieved by 5th South Lancashires and went into billets at Forceville. They were in and out of the line for the rest of the month, being part of the time in "rest" at Mailly-Maillet, though rest was out of the question, as a large number of working parties had to be found. Another stretch of trenches, with a frontage of 1,500 yards, was taken over on the 26th, being partly the old French line, the old German line and a new section dug by the French after a successful attack. A great deal had to be done, for the work was badly traversed and the parapet was undercut both front and back, whilst a drainage system had to be provided. A company of the 8th East Lancashires was attached for instruction. The month's casualties were 13—three of whom were killed. During the first year of the war 78 officers had served with the 2nd Essex, of whom 52 had been either killed, wounded, invalided or taken prisoner.

September 1st was marked by an inspection of the line by Major-General Sir H. F. M. Wilson, K.C.B. Next day the 2nd Seaforths took the place of the Essex and the weary wait for billets at Forceville was lightened by the news that the Russian Emperor had bestowed rewards for gallant and distinguished service upon members of the Battalion. The Seaforths considerably improved the trenches during their stay, making traverses three to four yards thick and 9ft. high. The enemy, however, had also been active and joined their sap-heads, making a new front line. They were equally aggressive with rifle grenades when the Essex were in the line again from 10th to 16th, though this did not deter the Battalion constructing four saps to the front edge of the wire. Whilst in billets at Forceville the men were marched to Hédauville on the 21st and were there inspected with the 1st Hampshires by Earl Kitchener of Khartoum. There was a great improvement in the time taken to effect trench relief, due to careful organization, and on the 22nd it was accomplished in one hour 40 minutes. Enemy aeroplanes were fired at on the 23rd and seven days later the Battalion was in billets at Acheux. The month's casualties totalled 24, four being killed.

THE SECOND WINTER.

The 2nd Essex spent the winter of 1915-16 in the Mailly-Maillet area very much concerned with the condition of the

trenches, but happily not suffering so severely as in 1914-15, although the wet and cold weather caused considerable discomfort.

In a review of the situation, dated February 6th, 1916, Lieut.-Colonel Sir George Stirling, Bart., who, in November, had assumed command from Lieut.-Colonel L. O. W. Jones, promoted to leadership of a brigade, stated that the trenches (which lay to the east of Hébuterne), considering the condition in which they had been taken over, had stood the worst of the winter very well. The front line was held by a series of posts, each garrisoned by two N.C.O's. and six men, and from 20 to 100 yards apart. Communication had been established with them by day, except on the left, which defect it was hoped to remedy. The main ways were boarded and clear, for the most part, whilst the German dug-outs which they occupied had held up well on the whole, but more accommodation was needed, especially in the front line. Sandbag revetment had given way almost everywhere and most of the trenches were either revetted with hurdles or expanding metal, held up by stakes well anchored back. "This is undoubtedly the only form of revetting of any use during the winter." Late in March the Battalion moved to trenches in the Bailleulval district—having marched in two days by way of Doullens, Beaurepaire, Halloy, Pommier, Larbret and Bailleulmont—and there the Essex held a frontage of 1,800 yards, the excavation being in good condition and continuous, except for a gap of 200 yards. Dug-outs, constructed by the French, were well arranged and the revetment consisted mostly of hurdles anchored well back to long stakes. The wiring was good. There were four communication trenches and the average distance from the enemy about 500 yards.

Getting back to the diary of events, the early days of October were spent quietly, relief being exchanged with the 2nd Seaforths. The two battalions were responsible for the left flank of Division in alignment with the 48th Division. Considerable consultation occurred on October 21st as to the proper method of securing the point of junction between the G.Os.C. 4th Division and 12th Brigade and the right brigade of the 48th. The issue was not settled until the 30th, when the G.Os.C. 4th and 48th Divisions met to hear the views of the commanding officers of the Essex and Seaforths, and of the 7th Worcesters and 6th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. Upon that occasion the G.O.C. 48th Division expressed his intention of meeting the wishes of the 4th Division, which were that the line should be held more strongly at night, that the supports should be closer and that strong posts should be established.

Late in October a company of the 11th Royal Irish Rifles was attached for instruction and during the closing days of the month an increase in the enemy artillery fire was noted. The casualties for October were slight, comprising two killed and 18 wounded.

A CHANGE OF DIVISION.

There was a good deal of temporary change in organization in November. On the first day of that month the 12th Brigade were ordered to form part of the 36th (Ulster) Division, a brigade of the latter coming into the 4th Division. The movements of the units to effect the exchange are rather interesting to note. On October 4th a column consisting of headquarters, No. 4 Signalling Section, 82nd Trench Howitzer Battery, 1st King's Own and 2nd Essex left Varennes for Rubempré. Headquarters were established at Canaples the next day, upon which the Essex marched to Beauval and came under orders of G.O.C. 109th Brigade, the King's Own moving to St. Léger. In the meantime the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and 1/5th South Lancashires had left Forceville and subsequently took over the billets of the Essex and King's Own in Rubempré. Simultaneously 11th and 14th Royal Irish Rifles, from 108th and 109th Brigades, moved into the 12th Brigade area, occupying billets at St. Léger and Pernois. Then on the 6th the Lancashire Fusiliers and South Lancashires marched out of Rubempré, the former proceeding to the 108th Brigade and the latter to Berteaucourt in the 12th Brigade area. The 12th Infantry Brigade was thus reconstituted as follows: 1st King's Own, 1/5th South Lancashires, 11th and 14th Royal Irish Rifles, of a total strength of 109 officers and 3,655 other ranks. The Essex were again incorporated in the 12th Brigade on December 10th and finally left the 36th Division on January 4th. A three days' march followed through Berneuil, Halloy, Berles-au-Bois to Pommier, where the Battalion was attached to the 110th Brigade of the 37th Division, under Brigadier-General Bainbridge, C.B., the Divisional Commander being Major-General Count Gleichen. It was the 37th Division to which the 1st Essex were attached during the final stages of the war in 1918. Whilst in billets later at Berles-au-Bois working parties were found by the Battalion until February 4th, when by way of Colincamps, Pommier, Souastre, Bayencourt and Sailly-au-Bois, billets were taken over from the King's Own, the latter then occupying the original position in front of Serre. Though back to the old Division, a note of February 6th stated that the Battalion was attached to the 48th Division for all purposes except rations.

Towards the close of January 2nd Lieut. R. M. Straight and 86 other ranks joined the 12th Brigade Machine Gun Company, the four Vickers' machine guns being replaced in the Battalion by four Lewis guns. This movement was the commencement of a new organization, which was to result in the establishment of the Machine Gun Corps. On the last day of the month the Colonel inspected the Battalion and the billets, his chief anxiety being the bad condition of the foot gear, though he was hoping for a large supply of new boots and leather before the next move was made.

As noted above, the next march was on February 4th to rejoin the 4th Division, but the day before the Battalion had an exciting experience, the Germans shelling Berles with 4.2 and 5.9 howitzers. There were no casualties in the Essex, but the Leicesters and a French battalion had 22 killed and 30 wounded.

From February 7th onward there was increasing intensity in the rival bombardments, particular attention being paid to the trench mortars on either side. On the 17th a Pole of the 66th Regiment, 52nd Division, surrendered. The month's casualties were six killed and 19 wounded.

The ward of the trenches was toilsome, but the monotony did not break the spirit of gallant enterprise, as the following story will show. At 6 a.m. on February 6th Lance-Corporal Rogers was severely wounded at an isolated post near Hébuterne and it was impossible to succour him except by crossing the open. Nevertheless, Sergeant W. Sharpley and Lance-Corporal Fancett made the attempt under fire and succeeded in getting the lance-corporal back to the front line. The operation, so bravely accomplished, was very difficult, not only on account of the exposed position, but because of the deep mud, and it was not until 1.15 p.m. that Rogers was in safety, or nearly six hours after the rescue party set out. For this exploit Sergeant Sharpley was deservedly awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

A move to Halloy was made on March 4th, billets being occupied in Bertrancourt on the evening of the following day. An inspection of the Battalion was undertaken by Major-General the Hon. W. Lambton on the 4th and the day after Bouquemaison was reached. Drafts totalling 84 men joined on the 5th and 14th respectively, the 4th Division taking over the line held by the 37th Division on March 19th. The Essex marched back to Halloy via Doullens and Beaurepaire and then came a succession of quiet days, the end of the month finding the Battalion in billets at Bailleulval.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SOMME OFFENSIVE.

The 2nd Essex were at Bailleulval all the month of April, 1916, being in and out of the line in exchange with the 2nd Duke of Wellington's Regiment and providing working parties. Lieut.-General Sir D'Oyly Snow, commanding VIII Corps, soon to be succeeded by General Hunter Weston, inspected the trench system on April 6th and Major-General Lambton, on the 10th, distributed cards to eight N.C.O's. and men for distinguished conduct in the field. On the last day of the month came orders to proceed to Sus-St. Léger and in the evening the 13th Royal Fusiliers took over the Essex billets. The Battalion marched into its new quarters on May Day for a few days' training in musketry, bayonet fighting, fire control and smoke helmet drill. Then on the 7th the 12th Brigade moved to huts in Bertrancourt, the rest of

the 4th Division lying in the Ribeaucourt area. During their stay in Bertrancourt—from May 8th to 23rd—the 2nd Essex had as near neighbours the 1st Battalion, billeted at Acheux, about two miles away.

The time was spent in providing large working parties and then on the 23rd May the 12th Brigade marched to Prouville *en route* for Yvrench in the Ribeaucourt area, where training was done in preparation for the great offensive, later to be known as the Battles of the Somme, and the greatest energy and keenness animated all ranks. Thereafter the record contains an almost monotonous repetition of the instruction by means of which it was hoped to overrun the German position. First there was simple practice in attack. Then on May 28th the officers of the 4th Division were assembled and the part to be played was explained. The rest of the month was busily employed in divisional training. On June 1st and 2nd signalling to an aeroplane contact patrol was practised and the next day General Sir A. Hunter Weston, who had taken over command of the Corps, held a conference. As a relief to the more serious business on hand the 4th Division held a horse show on June 2nd and the transport provided prize-winners. The first award was secured for light draught horse turn-out in general service limber waggon, the third place for pair of heavy draught horses in travelling field kitchen and the fifth prize for a pair of light draught horses in harness only which had served throughout the war and been attended by the same driver during that period.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL ANLEY'S DEPARTURE.

Great regret was expressed at the departure on June 5th of Brigadier-General F. Gore Anley, C.B., from the command of the 12th Brigade, whose successor was Brigadier-General Crosbie. It was General Anley's proud boast that he had never known the Brigade to yield a trench to the enemy. He subsequently commanded for a time the 234th Brigade of the 75th Division in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. The athletic meeting for the brigade shield was a most exciting event, for the Essex were only just beaten by the Lancashire Fusiliers by 2½ points. By the 9th June the Battalion was on the move again, this time for Bois de Warnimont, which was reached on the 11th via Prouville and Beauval, parties of "A" and "C" Companies being temporarily detached to Sarton and Puchevillers. The whole of "D" Company and the remainder of "A" Company (180 in all) were ordered to Mailly-Maillet on the 12th to construct artillery emplacements, whilst "B" Company and a party from "C" Company (200 of all ranks) were employed at Bertrancourt in laying cable underground. The Battalion, with the 12th Brigade, moved into the latter village next day. A few days later a miniature model in clay of the trenches which had been

allotted to the Brigade to capture was closely studied. As the days passed activity increased and at 10 p.m. on June 26th the great bombardment of the enemy's trenches began, which lasted with little intermission until the offensive was launched on July 1st. An early morning gas attack was also initiated, whilst a few hours later the Brigade carried out final practice in the Louvencourt area, the enemy putting shells from a long-range gun into Bertrancourt as a reminder that he was vigilant. Small drafts joined, including men from the Northhamptons. On the 27th the first casualties (five wounded) for many weeks were reported. Another gas attack was launched and a raid carried out on the German front line trenches. The same day the Divisional Commander (Major-General Lambton) explained the scope of the forthcoming operations, urging all to uphold the famous traditions of the past. Enemy artillery showed increased activity the next day, putting missiles on to the Bertrancourt cross-road.

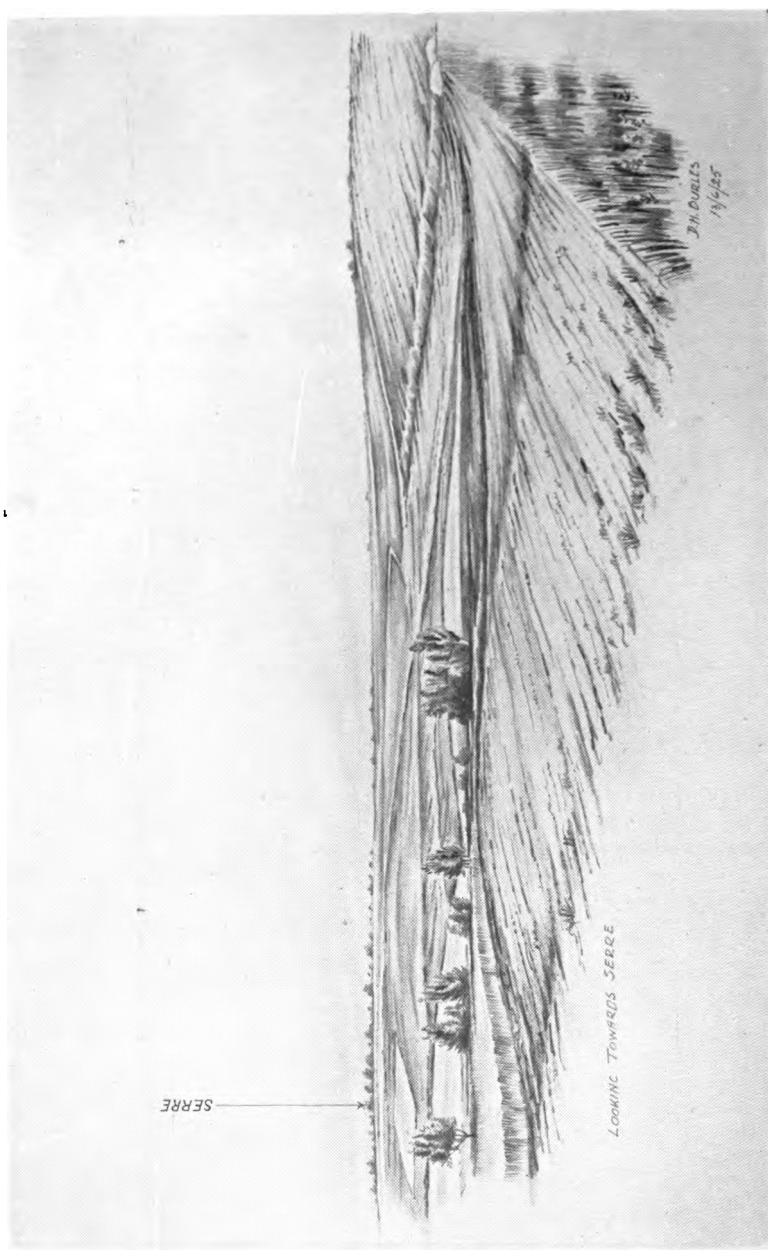


FIRST BATTLE OF THE SOMME.

The long prepared for attack had been timed for the early morning of June 29th, but later in the afternoon orders for a 48 hours' postponement were received, together with instructions that the Battalion was to assemble on the night of the 30th. This was accordingly done and at 11.10 p.m. the Essex left Bertrancourt, proceeding to the assembly trenches by a route across country which had been staked out for them, to play their part in the grim effort between Gommecourt and Thiepval, whilst other British forces broke in farther south. The troops in this sector were called upon to storm "a chain of fortified villages—Gommecourt, Serre, Beaumont-Hamel, Thiepval—and enemy positions which were generally on higher and better ground. The Ancre cut the line in two, with steep slopes rising from the valley bottom. Each village had been so fortified as to be almost impregnable, with a maze of catacombs, often two stories deep, where whole battalions could take refuge, underground passages from the firing line to sheltered places in the rear and pits into which machine guns could be lowered during a bombardment. On the plateau behind, with excellent direct observation, the Germans had their guns massed." The VIII Corps included both the Essex regular battalions, for the 1st Essex were serving with the 29th Division to the right of their comrades of the 2nd Battalion in the 4th Division.

The VIII Corps was on the left of the attack—save for a subsidiary effort by divisions of the Third Army against a pronounced salient at Gommecourt—and three of its divisions were employed in the movement—31st Division on the left against Serre, 4th Division in the centre and 29th Division on the right against Beaumont-Hamel, with the 48th Division in reserve. The storm was directed against the Grandcourt-Puisieux ridge, and upon which, when won, a defensive flank was to be formed towards Puisieux. There was a formidable series of trenches to be taken ere the ridge was reached. Whatever the optimistic calculations of the Higher Staff might have been, the effort stood little chance of success from the outset against strong resistance, for upon approximately four miles of frontage each Division was launched against special points thereon, and the offensive had insufficient weight behind it. The attack was gallantly made and pressed with determination, but was not successful. The failure to seize this corner of the ridge had an important effect upon the initial operations of the Battles of the Somme. Had

1. "A History of the Great War," p. 163, Vol. III. (Buchan).



Opening of the Somme Battle, 1st July, 1916: The Ground over which the Battalion fought to the left of Beaumont-Hamel.

Beaumont-Hamel, Serre and the heights been taken the occupation of the enemy main position would have been even more seriously imperilled than by the break-through farther south between Fricourt and Montauban. The German High Command had expended great care and labour upon the defences and concentrated much artillery in support. The 31st Division moved stoutly forward on the left, but could not capture Serre. In the centre the 4th Division penetrated some distance into the enemy's system north of Beaumont-Hamel (Pendant Copse), but could not maintain the advance in face of a counter-attack owing to the exposure of its flanks by the check to the 31st Division and to the repulse of the 29th Division against Beaumont-Hamel, one of the strongest parts of the line.

A TRYING DAY: 1st JULY, 1916.

The attack of the 4th Division was divided into five phases. The first was a five days' bombardment of the enemy's trenches, with gas emissions in addition; the second, prior to the infantry effort, was an intensive fire with artillery mortars. The third step was the capture of the first and second objectives—the enemy's front line defensive system—by the 11th Brigade, followed, as a fourth phase, by a bombardment of the chief objective—the portion of Puisieux Ridge to the right of Serre, the most prominent feature of which was Pendant Copse—which was, finally, to be taken by the 10th and 12th Brigades. The orders for the 12th Brigade were to leave their trenches an hour and a half after the 11th Brigade and, with the 10th Brigade, to “leap-frog” over the 11th Brigade, then to advance and capture a portion of the Puisieux-Grandcourt ridge. It was rolling chalky country, with the enemy positions well in view, but so also were the movements of the attackers as they passed into the valley in their gallant but fruitless effort to capture the slopes ahead, upon the top of which was the hamlet of Serre, set amongst gorse-clad moorland.

The enemy's reply to the preliminary bombardment was not intense, but when the British heavy artillery lifted at 7.25 to cover the infantry advance it increased in volume and was accompanied by violent machine gun fire from the three German lines. It was chiefly directed against the front line trenches on No Man's Land and the support area, and on the northern boundary of the 4th Division was supplemented by the concentrated fire of both heavy and field guns. Three battalions of the 11th Brigade went over at 7.26 a.m., 7.29 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. respectively. The bulk of the East Lancashires, on the right, were unable to cross the wire, which was uncut in several places, but three platoons succeeded in entering the German front line and the Hampshires, who went in support of the East Lancashires at 7.40 p.m., also suffered cruelly, though some of the men were

able to cross No Man's Land, taking cover in small holes. The Rifle Brigade succeeded in breaking into the German line and were reinforced by the Somersetshire Light Infantry. The 6th Royal Warwicks also went through and joined with the Rifle Brigade, when a further advance was made. At 9 a.m., when the offensive of the 10th and 12th Brigades began (the Essex War Diary states the Battalion left the assembly trenches at 8.36 a.m., immediately encountering heavy artillery and machine gun fire), the German front line had been partially overrun and the strong point called the Quadrilateral, in front of Munich trench, was in our possession, though the assailants were troubled by bombing from the flanks and from the communication trenches leading from Munich. The 2nd Dublin Fusiliers and 2nd Seaforths were the leading battalions of the 10th Infantry Brigade and the 2nd Essex (right) and 1st King's Own of the 12th Infantry Brigade. The line of advance of the Pompadours was by the right of Pendant Copse, directly on the church spire of Miraumont, which lay in a hollow beyond Puisieux Ridge. The Dublins suffered severely and were halted in their own trenches. Similar orders were given to the Seaforths, but did not reach them. They inclined to the north to avoid machine gun fire from the neighbourhood of Beaumont-Hamel and reached the trenches already occupied by portions of the 11th Brigade, subsequent instructions for them to bomb their way southward to relieve the pressure on the right not being received. The King's Own and the Essex ("A" and "D" Companies leading) were more fortunate. They suffered considerably from shell-fire, but were able to reach the Rifle Brigade and the Warwicks and reinforce them, whilst small parties entered Munich trench and even penetrated to the western edge of Pendant Copse, a wood which lay near the head of a narrow and desolate valley, north of Ancre Valley and $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles behind the German line. From 11 a.m. onwards the parties in the Munich trench were driven out and by noon they were back in the Quadrilateral and adjacent trench line, being hampered by lack of ammunition, due to the heavy loss among carriers when attempting to cross the barrage. The Lancashire Fusiliers and a company of the Duke of Wellington's were also pushed into this vital point and the struggle went on fiercely during the whole of the afternoon despite the heavy loss in company officers. At 1.40 p.m. G.O.C. 4th Division realized that the objective could not be obtained without further artillery fire. The G.O.C. 10th and 12th Brigades were allotted the defence of the line, the brigadier of the latter being entrusted with the left sector, including the German trenches held by us, which he was to consolidate. The scattered units of the 11th Brigade were to be collected and re-formed as divisional reserve. From 2 p.m. until midnight the struggle to hold the Quadrilateral went on, the mixed parties of the 11th and 12th Brigades being

reinforced by two companies of the Royal Irish Fusiliers and a supply of bombs. At 5 p.m. the attackers had been driven back to the base of the Quadrilateral. Captain A. G. de la Mare and Second Lieut. J. J. Ward, the two remaining officers of the Essex, were prominent in this struggle, in which hand grenades were chiefly used. The British soldiers had an inadequate supply, which was eked out with bombs found in the German trenches. Then our own heavy artillery shelled the little stronghold, but, luckily, before harm was done, this firing was stopped by means of signals from an electric lamp which had been found. Communication was also maintained with the old front line by visual signalling. By midnight, or soon after, the exhausted troops were relieved, though a company of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, with whom it had been impossible to communicate, remained in position until 11.30 the next morning, when it returned, bringing in all its wounded, three German prisoners and some material.

The front upon which the 4th Division attacked was 2,000 yards and that corresponded with the line held by the 121st German Reserve Infantry Regiment (three battalions). The Heidenkopf (a strong redoubt named after a local commander, but known to the British as the Quadrilateral) formed a salient and was a remnant of a former line that lay through Touvent Farm west of Serre. The German account states that headquarters realized it could not be held against a general attack and made arrangements for blowing it up as the British entered. On the morning of July 1st the redoubt was only defended by a machine gun and some engineers who were to explode the mine. The machine gun jammed and the mine went up too soon, so that the garrison was non-existent when the British entered. The force of the explosion had blocked many of the German dug-outs and so the whole company holding the sector was overrun. A hastily-placed machine gun held up the assaulting line for a time, but the advance was resumed when fresh waves came on, only to be checked at Munich trench by machine gun fire from that quarter and on both flanks, which were still holding out. "For an hour the situation was at a deadlock until the 3rd Battalion, the reserve battalion of the 121st Reserve Infantry Regiment, occupying this sector of the Munich trench, was ordered to deliver a counter-stroke. A company and a bombing section of the neighbouring regiment, 169th (52nd Division), was to support it by an attack from the flank, from Serre. At the same time, the German batteries behind Serre placed a barrage along the British front trench, which effectively prevented the advance of supports to those who had broken through the German front defences. The ground between the support trench and the Munich trench was pitted with shell craters caused by the British bombardment, and using these as a protection, the counter-attack of the 3rd

Battalion developed rapidly. Working forward from front and flanks, the Germans ran from crater to crater, gradually forcing back the invaders, most of the fighting being with hand grenades. The British, the German account admits, defended themselves throughout with remarkable obstinacy and courage, barricading themselves at every step and showing fight to the last. Without supports, however, their supply of bombs and ammunition ran short and they were compelled to withdraw to the Heidenkopf crater by midday. Hand-to-hand fighting in the crater continued throughout the afternoon and it was not until dusk that the Germans succeeded in regaining the line of their front trench."¹ The casualties of the German regiment for the day are given in their regimental history as approximately 170 dead and 290 wounded. If this be true, their loss only just exceeded that of the 2nd Essex alone, such is the effect of unsubdued artillery and machine gun fire supporting a naturally strong position.

The Essex, who were commanded by Sir George Stirling, Bart., had a total strength, including those left in camp, of 42 officers and 975 other ranks. Of these 24 officers and 606 other ranks went into action and by evening had been reduced to two officers and 192 other ranks. The Battalion was then in the assembly trenches and by noon on July 2nd was in the original front line again, suffering 20 casualties and damage to the trenches by artillery fire. It was an arduous and trying time, for though worn out with the exertion of the attack the men were employed in the daylight hours in collecting material and ammunition, recovering the dead and wounded, and repairing and consolidating the trenches. The officers who fell in the heroic but fruitless fighting included Captain B. S. Smith-Masters, Lieuts. T. Fraser, A. M. Middleditch, 2nd Lieutenants S. C. Goodchild, A. Holmes, T. N. Ide, T. J. Kirk, L. G. Smith, G. Waterhouse and H. R. White. The commanding officer was wounded and the command devolved on acting Major A. E. Maitland, M.C., who handed over a few days later to Major R. N. Thompson on the latter's return from headquarters of the 12th Brigade.

There was little activity in the Beaumont-Hamel sector after the initial assault had been repulsed and the Battalion was not employed in the Somme area again until the last stages of the fighting near Gueudecourt in October of the same year. On July 5th, 1916, the men marched into billets at Mailly-Maillet for a brief rest in pouring rain. They remained there until the night of the 7th, when the Duke of Wellington's were relieved. The trenches were in a very bad state owing to the wet weather and the front line could only be held by a series of posts. Two companies supplied garrisons for the latter and the other two were in support, both our own and enemy artillery roaring in never-ceasing tumult. An officer patrol reconnoitred the enemy

1. "Army Quarterly," April, 1924, pp. 84 and 85.



Another view of the Battleground, 1st July, 1916.

Photo by H. H. Burrows.

trenches on the night of July 9th and found that the wire had not been repaired, but that apparently the front line in that neighbourhood was not being held. Through an error a smoke cloud was emitted the same night, to which the enemy retorted with a barrage along the brigade front, lasting until the smoke had passed away. Relieved by 1st Somersetshire Light Infantry, the Battalion marched to billets in Bertrancourt on the 11th, and although the men were very tired, the officers had the satisfaction of reporting no cases of trench feet. A draft of 85 joined and next day the Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, addressed the Battalion, recounting the deeds of the 4th Division and complimenting the Essex upon their smart turn-out, adding, "The men have cleaned themselves up well in such a short time." Specialist training was the order of the day. The tedium thereof was varied by a little long-distance shelling, one of the missiles bursting within ten yards of the Battalion orderly room. On July 17th the Brigade took over a section of the line in front of Auchonvillers, the Essex being in reserve. Ten officers and 97 other ranks joined on the 18th, when large working parties were found, persistent shell-fire interfering with their labour. Lieut. S. J. H. Taber was killed on the 20th, the day before the 9th Essex relieved the Battalion, which then proceeded to huts in Vauchelles. By way of Authieule, Doullens was reached on July 23rd, when train was taken for Cassel, from which Houtkerque was made by march. Company training ensued for the next day or two and then on July 27th thirty motor 'buses conveyed the Battalion to the reserve line at Elverdinghe, the 4th Division having relieved the Guards.

IN THE SALIENT AGAIN.

On August 3rd the Essex replaced the Royal Warwicks upon the Yser Canal Bank, and the next day were in the front line again, having taken over, with three companies from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the sector from Algerian Cottage to Wieltje Farm. Battalion headquarters and half a company were at Irish Farm and the other half company in isolated trenches about Hilltop Farm. The defences were in a bad state, having high commands and the communication ways very shallow and exposed. The Essex were relieved on the 8th, but they had no rest, for there was constant shelling, with reports of gas attacks, which, happily, did not materialize on this part of the line. The remainder of August was spent either in the front trenches, upon the Canal Bank, or in billets at Poperinghe, the last day of the month finding the Battalion in a hop warehouse in the last-named town adjoining the railway station. There were a considerable number wounded or sick during the month.

Back from Poperinghe to the Canal Bank on September 7th, the Essex were before long in the trenches at Irish Farm. They

proceeded to Poperinghe on the 16th, when they rejoined the 12th Brigade after over a month's temporary service with the 10th Brigade. The Poperinghe hop warehouse was evacuated on the 17th, when the Battalion entrained for Saleux, being billeted on the 19th in Bertangles and Vaux. A draft of 219 other ranks joined two days later. On September 25th the Essex moved to Cardonnette, marching part of the way cross country in artillery formation, which Brigadier-General Crosbie was heard to declare was the best practice advance he had ever seen carried out in his brigade. By the 26th the Battalion was in La Neuville and had the pleasure two days later of welcoming its commander in early Ypres days, Brigadier-General L. O. W. Jones, D.S.O., now of the 18th Infantry Brigade, which, two days before, had taken part in the capture of Morval.

Early October was spent in practising attack, for the 4th Division were destined before long to be again fighting in the Somme area. Orders came to march to the Citadel, Arras, on the 8th. It rained all day and as part of the route was across country the men had a muddy time. The huts and tents at the Citadel were very crowded, but next day the Essex were on the march to Trônes Wood as divisional reserve. The rain still continuing, movement was very difficult. The Lewis gun carts stuck in the mud near Carnoy and had to be left behind and the guns carried. Trônes Wood was reached at 3 p.m., six hours having been taken to cover $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Almost immediately orders came to go in brigade reserve near Flers and at 6 p.m. the Battalion was in position, with the King's Own on the left and the Duke of Wellington's and Lancashire Fusiliers in front, to the left of Lesbœufs. Next day the King's Own went back to Trônes Wood in divisional reserve, the Essex taking their place.

PIERCING LE TRANSLOY LINE.

The last efforts were being made to force the Le Transloy line. "The troops already engaged in the Somme offensive had had ample experience of hardships and difficulties; those encountered in October and November altogether surpassed what had gone before. The state of the ground was appalling; it had become a sea of mud, through which even the lightly equipped runners found movement almost impossible, much more men laden with rifle, equipment and ammunition. In these conditions an ordinary trench relief was an achievement, to attack across such ground a hopeless undertaking." It was in these circumstances that the 4th Division launched an offensive on a portion of enemy trenches in the neighbourhood of Gueudecourt. The assault was undertaken, in co-operation with the French, on the 12th October, by two battalions each of the 10th and 12th Brigades, the first-named having the 1st Royal Warwicks (right) and 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, whilst the 12th (left) had 2nd Duke of

Wellington's (right) and Lancashire Fusiliers, with the Essex in brigade reserve and the King's Own in divisional reserve. The Essex had to set aside 10 per cent. of the personnel as a reinforcement, including 15 per cent. N.C.O's. Four per cent. N.C.O's. and 60 men acted as carriers, being divided into three parties, each 21 strong. Two were attached to the Duke of Wellington's and one to the Lancashire Fusiliers. At 2.5 p.m. the Brigades went over. On the right the Royal Warwicks achieved some success, but elsewhere, although sections of the enemy trenches were temporarily occupied, the men were ultimately withdrawn to the assembly trenches. Men of the Duke of Wellington's actually reached the objective, but were never seen again, the battalion suffering heavily from machine gun fire in No Man's Land. The Essex carrying parties attached to this regiment were employed in defence and the battalion commander commented upon their excellent work, particularly noting Sergeant Anslow. Essex snipers were reported as most active, causing many casualties. Reinforcements were asked for by the Lancashire Fusiliers to hold the line and a company of the Essex, under Captain L. J. Ward, moved forward, the commander of the Lancashires expressing his gratitude for the prompt assistance rendered.

On the evening of October 14th the attempt was renewed by the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers and 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, but although pressed home, it was not productive of permanent result. That same day the Essex moved into the line vacated by the Fusiliers. Accidental shelling by our own heavies caused 25 casualties on the 18th and another five the next day. On October 20th came welcome relief by the 2nd Scottish Rifles, the Battalion bivouacking in Trônes Wood after vexatious delay caused by two incoming Lewis guns losing their way. Of rest there was none, for the Essex were immediately warned that they were to attack on October 23rd in the same neighbourhood as the unsuccessful effort of October 12th. In this operation the 4th and 8th Divisions were employed against enemy positions east of Lesbœufs and Gueudecourt in conjunction with the French against Saily-Saillisel heights and St. Pierre Vaast Wood. By this means "our footing on the crest of Le Transloy spur was extended and secured and the much contested tangle of trenches at our junction with the French left at last passed definitely into our possession."

Let us see how fortune fared with the Essex. The first objective was an imaginary line 700 yards from our trenches and about 500 yards behind the enemy front and when this was taken the second wave was to pass through in an endeavour to secure a further depth of 500 yards, or 1,200 yards in all. A heavy mist caused a postponement from 11.30 a.m. until 2.30 p.m. and when, at that hour, the troops went over they were met by heavy

1. Sir Douglas Haig's Dispatches, p. 48.

machine gun fire. The first four waves were stopped by the German front line and only a few crossed it. The second four waves, when they leapt over ten minutes later, were also fiercely assailed by fire and stopped. A party of about thirty and two Lewis guns reached the first objective. They commenced to dig in, but finding no support on flanks or in the rear, and all officers and N.C.O.'s having become casualties, they had to withdraw, the left company being represented by a remnant of four men and the right company by about 12 men, with two Lewis guns. By 9 p.m. the survivors were back in the original assembly trenches, with the exception of a few men who held out in shell holes until early the next morning. The Battalion had 255 casualties—14 killed, 75 wounded and 166 missing. Officers who fell included 2nd Lieuts. E. V. M. Orford and F. T. Waldron. Many of the missing men were later reported killed.

The Essex, sadly reduced in numbers, bivouacked in Trônes Wood on the night of the 24th, and later went on to Mericourt-l'Abbé, which was reached on October 28th. Another move was made next day, with a series of irritating incidents. A lorry was promised to carry the kit from the billets to the station, but none arrived. The loan of a vehicle was subsequently obtained. On detraining at Airaines at 11 p.m., again there was no lorry and the kit was left at the station. All that night they marched across country—misled by useless maps—and it was not until five in the morning that Fricourt was entered. In the darkness two Lewis gun handcarts became detached and were lost. Country carts were employed on the 30th to move the kit from the station, and upon the last day of October the Battalion was busily engaged in refitting and cleaning-up. The divisional casualties for the month totalled 4,193—officers, 89 killed, 99 wounded and 31 missing; other ranks, 554 killed, 2,437 wounded and 1,033 missing.

AN OUTBREAK OF MUMPS.

Depleted in numbers and needing to be reorganized and retrained, the Battalion was established at Bouillancourt, near to Blangy, on November 3rd, 1916, where it remained for the rest of the month. As the headquarters of the 12th Brigade were in the same village there was considerable congestion. Château d'Ancennes, lying on the outskirts, was taken as Battalion headquarters, but proved too remote, and the latter were accordingly moved into Bouillancourt again. The commander of the 4th Division (Major-General W. H. Lambton) inspected the billets on the 5th and on the same day a draft of 166 other ranks was received. Lieut.-General Sir J. P. du Cane, K.C.B., commanding XV Corps, presented medal ribbons to men of the Division on November 8th. Freed for the time being from the risks of the trenches, the Battalion was faced with another

trial in the form of an outbreak of mumps, which had been brought by the draft reporting for duty on November 6th. The village of Wattebléry was taken over as a segregation station and all contacts were removed there on the 10th, the same day that a reinforcing party of 56 other ranks arrived. The epidemic, however, spread with great rapidity, for 120 contacts were removed. The day after 82 reinforcements reported and then on the 12th five cases of measles were discovered and another 20 men were segregated for mumps. For the rest of the month the Battalion was chiefly concerned with coping with the outbreak ; this while the Somme fighting had died away with the capture of the line of the Ancres on November 18th. Colonel Stirling became area commandant to the XV Corps. A cross-country run on the 18th ended in " A " Company taking first position.

THE MUD OF PICARDY.

With the advent of December came orders for a move again and the Battalion experienced a very difficult and trying time. The 12th Brigade moved away on December 3rd. The Essex were ordered to march to Oisemont and left at 6.45 a.m. for the second train, due to start at 11 a.m. Whilst on the journey a message came that the first train, timed to leave at 7.30 a.m., had not arrived at the station, so that the Essex had to march through Oisemont and bivouac in a field near the railway. The second train left at 5 p.m. and five hours later the Battalion was at Mericourt l'Abbé, where it detrained and marched off at 11 p.m. to Camps 111 and 112, one and a half miles north of Bray on the Bray-Méaulte Road. It was a long and toilsome march and Camp 112 was not reached until 3.45 a.m. on the 4th. There was not much rest for the weary soldiers and at 10.45 they were on the move again to Camp 107 in Billon Wood, close to the Bray-Maricourt Road. There were frequent checks, owing to the road being repeatedly blocked by French traffic and it was 2 p.m. before the camp was reached. It was badly situate, having a ravine dividing it from the road and, therefore, providing difficult access for transport. The Battalion, temporarily commanded by Captain N. M. S. Irwin, M.C., was to go into the reserve line at Frégicourt to relieve the 1st Mixte Regiment (French)—the British Command having taken over further responsibility from the French—and accordingly on December 6th Camp 20 was made on the Maricourt-Suzanne Road, half a mile south of the former place, the relief of the French troops at Frégicourt being completed by 10.30 p.m. on the 7th. Heavy rain set in on the 10th and the Essex were hard put to it for shelter. Gumboots and a pair of socks were issued to each man before going into the front line to replace the West Ridings. Commencing at 6 p.m., the movement was not complete until 3 a.m., the muddy condition of the ground and trenches being appalling. Two officers and

77 other ranks were stuck in the mud whilst moving over the top of the ground. "A" Company's relief was completed by C.S.M. Flack (both officers having become fast in the mud) and two platoons and two Lewis guns were lost from "B" Company. Many of the men made their appearance next day from other parts of the line. Three days later an officer and over 70 men were still noted as missing and it was not until the 19th that the bulk of them reported, probably from field ambulances. The left of the Battalion rested on the southern edge of Saillisel, with three companies in the forward line and one in support. The main concern was the villainous weather. No material was available for shelter and inter-communication was impossible except at night. The effect of the exhaustion occasioned during relief and the subsequent unceasing rain is reflected in the fact that 76 men were evacuated to hospital in three days, whilst large numbers were treated by the Battalion medical officer. The diary states: "The conditions of the last tour were worse than any previously experienced by the Battalion." During the relief Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson rejoined the Battalion. Frost made a welcome appearance on the 15th, so that the return to reserve was completed upon hard ground. Two companies were quartered in dug-outs near Brigade Headquarters in Mouchoir Copse and two in cellars in Combles. Fires were lit in all dug-outs and cellars and the men's clothing dried, for it was soddened. On December 17th the two companies in dug-outs were sent to tents in Maurepas Ravine by motor lorry, but the effects of their terrible experience were still severely felt, for upon the 16th, 17th and 18th over 70 men were sent to hospital. The Essex were in the front line again on the 20th and with hard weather ensuing, the task of cleaning the trenches progressed rapidly, but as there was still no revetting material available, it was prophesied, "The next fall of rain will ruin the trenches again and nullify all the work done." Rain recommenced two days later, but the Battalion was relieved the following day by the Household Battalion. On the evening before the transfer attempts at fraternization were detected, but prompt measures were taken and as a result two Germans were sniped and two German officers and a private were captured. On Christmas Eve the men marched into Camp 107 near Maurepas very tired and wet and so inauspicious were the surroundings that the usual festivities on Christmas Day were postponed, though the Quartermaster provided a pleasant surprise in the form of a free issue of beer. Working parties were provided to work at Maurepas, Bray and other places and so depleted was the strength by these requirements that when the Battalion went to Camp 124 near Saily-Laurette the total strength on the march was approximately 100 other ranks, with transport. The column consisted of Battalion headquarters, two company headquarters and 10 Lewis gun hand carts.

CHANGE OF BRIGADIERS.

On January 3rd G.O.C. 4th Division inspected the camp and seemed pleased with improvements carried out. A welcome draft of 233 other ranks joined the Battalion on the 7th and their physique and general appearance were declared to be good. Lieut.-General du Cane, commanding XV Corps, visited the Battalion on January 10th and a notable change of command of the 12th Brigade occurred on the 12th, when Brigadier-General Crosbie, D.S.O., was succeeded by Brigadier-General Carton de Wiart, V.C., D.S.O. The officers celebrated Christmas on the same day and on the 14th the other ranks also kept the festival, each company and the Quartermaster's store and transport dining separately. The Battalion continued sickly, for there were almost daily transfers to hospital, but the men had something more cheering to think about on the 19th, for in the Brigade boxing tournament Private Fox won the welter-weight competition and Private Burns was runner-up in the heavyweights. Then, two days afterwards, the Battalion had a notable success at the Brigade rifle meeting, winning the cup for an event in which three teams co-operated, one of officers, another of warrant officers and sergeants and a third composed of other ranks. On January 23rd the Essex marched to Camp 112, near Bray, and their advent was noted, for on the night of the 25th hostile aeroplanes made a bombing raid and killed 16 mules, repeating the dose on the 26th, when three horses were wounded. That day Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson went to hospital and Major S. G. Mullock took over command. Another draft of 199 reported on the 27th, again a welcome reinforcement, for though not in the line, the Battalion had a steady dribble of men to hospital.

NEAR BOUCHAVESNES.

On the opening day of February the 12th Brigade relieved the 11th Brigade, with the Essex in reserve. Two companies, with headquarters, were in Junction Wood and two others at Curlu, which had been captured by the French seven months before. The enemy were active and raided the point of junction of the two battalions holding the Brigade front line, but were repulsed and two days after, February 5th, the Essex relieved the Duke of Wellington's and were once more watching the enemy with three companies, the fourth in support. The Battalion headquarters were in an old quarry 500 yards south of Bouchavesnes, a village which the French had taken by storm in the September previously, securing over 2,000 prisoners. The British artillery was well employed and dominated the enemy counter fire. The front line consisted of a series of posts, connected by a shallow trench about three feet deep, with inadequate wiring. Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Pratt, D.S.O., from the staff of the 80th Division, took over command on February 8th, and the

next day the Battalion moved back into close support, with three companies in dug-outs west of the Bapaume-Péronne Road, north and south of Bouchavesnes, the other company being in a dug-out at Messimy. The unit was still sickly and there were daily transfers to hospital. An intended raid by the Duke of Wellington's, who were in the line, was postponed owing to the wire being insufficiently cut. The enemy apparently knew of the intended movement, for they barraged the trenches heavily three hours before the time fixed, though attempting no infantry attack themselves. Essex were in the front line when, on February 15th, came the first real sign of a thaw after a month's continuous frost and there was rain the next day, when the whole Brigade moved back to a rest area. On the 17th the Battalion was bathing at Bray and then went on to Corbie, when Lieut.-Colonel Pratt left for hospital. From February 22nd to the end of the month the Essex were in billets in Rue Gambetta, Corbie, reorganizing, but the wastage from sickness may be best gauged from the fact that at this period a reinforcing draft of 45 reported, but 42 left the Battalion on account of illness. The Pompadours' Pierrot Troupe afforded entertainment by a performance on the 24th, organized by Rev. S. Taylor, which took place in the Grand Cinema.

NO CINEMATOGRAPH OPERATOR.

There was a disappointment early in March. On the opening day of the month the Battalion practised marching past, because a cinematograph operator had instructions to take a film. He was due to appear the next day, but for some unknown reason failed to present himself. Warning came that the Brigade was to move into the Third Army area and, accordingly, on the 4th, the Battalion marched to Coisy in grand weather, General Sir Henry Rawlinson watching the men pass the gates of the Army headquarters at Querrieu. Beauval was reached on the 5th, then Mézerolles, via Bernaville, on the 6th, where Brigadier-General Lewes and Captain Meares, M.C., G.S.O., XIII Corps, paid a visit. Sickness continued and in three days 50 men went to hospital. The Battalion was in Gennes-Ivergny by the 8th and there was active training for a fortnight, varied by football matches. A move came, the prelude to more active service, on March 22nd, when by way of Frévent, St. Pol, Roëllecourt, Monchy-Breton was reached. Mumps and measles caused "C" and "D" Companies to go into quarantine. The last stages of preparations were being completed for an offensive which led to great results, and for the purpose of studying the ground the commanding officer and staff visited the forward area north of Arras. On March 31st Lieut.-Colonel Pratt was invalided and Lieut.-Colonel S. G. Mullock again took over. The Battalion marched to huts one thousand yards west of Etrun on April 7th, where an observation balloon was brought down in flames by an enemy aeroplane.

BATTLE OF ARRAS AND THE CAPTURE OF FAMPOUX.

The Battle of Arras is chiefly connected in the popular mind with the capture of Vimy Ridge by the First Army, one of the great exploits of the war, but it was equally remarkable for the success achieved by other divisions north of the Scarpe and in the immediate neighbourhood of Arras itself. The 4th Division was intimately associated with the relief of the ancient French city from closer German investment, for it was one of a group of divisions which pushed the enemy far back from positions overlooking Arras and almost at its gates. The 2nd Essex were with the 12th Brigade of the 4th Division, which was part of the XVII Corps (Third Army), consisting of 9th, 4th, 34th and 51st Divisions. These operated immediately to the left of Arras, with the Canadian Corps on their left. To their right was the VI Corps, composed of the 3rd, 12th, 15th and 37th Divisions. The divisions in the vicinity of the city comprised the 9th immediately on the left facing St. Laurent-Blangy, a suburb just behind the German front line, with the 4th in support; the 15th operated from Arras itself, with the 12th on their immediate right and the 37th in support. The enemy defences in front of XVII Corps were formidably strong, consisting of four lines to a depth of from 4,000 to 4,500 yards, and orders were to overrun this system and take the village of Fampoux and a strong detached work known as Hyderabad Redoubt. The first three lines were to be captured by the 9th, 34th and 51st Divisions, the 4th Division then to pass through the 9th Division and secure Fampoux and the Redoubt, forming also a defensive flank to the Point du Jour. The fourth trench system, which the 4th Division had to force, was sited on the reverse slope of the Point du Jour Ridge and was not visible from the British lines. It was organized with a fire and support trench, strongly wired and provided with dug-outs. In the rear of it ran two sunken roads lined with mined dug-outs.

It was a cold, snowy morning on Easter Monday, when the men from Scotland and South Africa of the 9th Division stormed St. Laurent-Blangy and then captured Athies, giving place to the 4th, who passed through to complete the task in this sector by the capture of Fampoux and the Hyderabad Redoubt, making the best advance of the day—three miles—and breaking “another wide gap in the German third line system.” On the right the 15th (Scottish) Division carried Feuchy and good progress was made by the 12th Division, men of the Eastern Counties. The 37th passed through the 15th to exploit this success and made some progress, but their effort to push forward in the direction of Monchy-le-Preux, soon to become a famous name in Essex annals, was held up by uncut wire. The day’s fighting in this “pockety country—the last foothills of the uplands of Northern France, and,

like all foothills, a strong position for any defence,"¹ relieved Arras from further menace for the time being and drove the enemy back along both sides of the Scarpe and the Douai railway. There was another fierce contest for positions to the east, but the full fruits of the British victory were not reaped, for the French offensive on the Aisne on April 16th, to which our effort was the prelude, was a failure, producing one of the crises of the war and the prompt replacement of the French commander-in-chief, General Nivelle.

At 4.25 on the morning of April 9th the Essex commenced their march to the assembly area west of St. Nicolas, an industrial suburb of Arras, and at 5.30 they were near St. Vaast Bridge, when the barrage fell and the advance of the 9th Division commenced "in the dark mist flecked with snowflakes." The Battalion had reached its post by 8 a.m. and enjoyed a hot meal. Two hours later the order came to advance by platoons at 100 yards distance. On reaching the old British front line, the Essex shook into artillery formation and thus continued their progress until they reached the cemetery north of St. Laurent-Blangy. An hour's halt was there called to allow the Cameronians to pass through for the effort against Athies. At 2.10 p.m. the Battalion halted near the latter village—2nd Lancashire Fusiliers on their right and 1st Somersetshire Light Infantry (11th Infantry Brigade) on the left—and the companies deployed into waves and fixed bayonets. At 3 p.m. the 12th Brigade was in full movement on a three battalion front without being impeded by serious hostile artillery fire. The Essex captured their first three prisoners through a mopping-up party in Cam trench, well past Athies, and at 3.20 p.m. they had crossed the ravine lying to the north-east of that village, within striking distance of Fampoux. Here an important capture was made of four 9.5 guns and one 77 m.m. gun, some of their crews being taken from the dug-out in which they had sought shelter. The German system round about Fampoux was reached at 3.40 p.m. The wire was uncut, but the enemy could be seen hurrying away. Two machine guns suddenly opened fire and killed three men cutting wire, but two Lewis gunners quickly put them out of action by a spirited attack, firing from the hip. The trenches and dug-outs of the enemy's fourth system were cleared, yielding 150 prisoners and three machine guns. At 4.10 p.m. the Essex had consolidated their position on the sunken road running from Fampoux to the Hyderabad Redoubt, the village having been taken by the 2nd Duke of Wellington's, who had passed through the leading battalions for that purpose. The evening was fine, with occasional showers, but comparatively quiet, only a few shells falling into the position between 3.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Patrols were sent forward to find signs of the enemy and touch was regained with the Lancashire Fusiliers on the right

1. "A History of the Great War," p. 449, Vol. III. (*Buchan*).

and the Somersets and Rifle Brigade on the left. The casualties, considering the extent of the success, were comparatively light, numbering 78—11 other ranks killed, 63 wounded and four missing. The captures by the Brigade included 230 prisoners, 24 guns, three trench mortars and seven machine guns.

AN EASTER MONDAY OUTING.

“An Easter Monday outing, finishing up with a bit of a dust-up and then some hard work” was the apt description applied to the day’s operations by a member of the Battalion. Another close observer in the ranks subsequently wrote: We moved off early on the Monday morning to our assembly place just out of the northern suburbs of Arras, passing *en route* through the artillery area. We seemed to be surrounded by guns when the barrage opened and we had been provided with cotton wool as protection for our ears. Our humorists called out chaffingly to the gunners, “Don’t do that; you’ll wake Jerry up!” The noise was simply deafening and with the further handicap of the cotton wool it was most difficult to carry on any sort of conversation. It was a little quieter in the assembly field. Here we had a good meal and the encouragement of an almost continuous procession of prisoners passing to the rear. I was much struck at the time by the readiness with which our men threw cigarettes to them. They gave them plenty of chaff, too, and the replies were often made in fluent English. It was after mid-day when we moved off on what I can only call a leisurely stroll forward. Later in the afternoon we passed through the 9th Division and advanced on our own. On our right the Scarpe-side village of Athies appeared to be on fire, with shells still falling into it. The German artillery was evidently withdrawing, for we had little in the way of shell-fire directed at us and we progressed in much the same way as we had done during the dress rehearsals, pausing every now and again in order to correct our distances. The enemy was so conspicuous by his absence that one of our wits surmised that “being bank holiday, Jerry had gone home to take the missus and kids out.” Then suddenly, with that incongruous touch which so often accompanies the tragedy of war, a large black dog appeared in pursuit of a rabbit, but both were quickly lost in some furze on the right. At one point two British artillery observers in a shell hole called to me to inform Colonel Mullock that the enemy was going back “like the very devil” and I remember our C.O. looking through his glasses to see for himself. To the naked eye there appeared to be a stream of troops and transport going up from Fampoux over the higher ground towards Monchy-le-Preux. Battalion headquarters were established in the German fourth system, the companies moving forward about a thousand yards to dig themselves in on “the green line.” Hereabouts the wire was

not much damaged and our men had to do some amount of cutting to get through. There was some show of defence of this line, but it was not very strong and where the Germans did not make good their escape they were easily taken prisoners.

Expectation ran high and next day orders came that the attack was to be continued. The Essex occupied the trench system in and about the sunken road leading from Fampoux to Hyderabad, with sections of the 12th Brigade Machine Gun Company in support. It was again snowy and very cold. Cavalry were expected about 4 p.m., at which hour a company of Somersets sought to capture an inn at the cross roads on the Gavrelle-Rœux road, but without success. Then at 4.15 p.m. some of the 1st Cavalry Division appeared, but there were no orders for an advance, headquarters deeming it impossible for horsemen to make progress against the machine gun fire. The positions seized on the day before were accordingly resumed at 6 p.m. Although the night was quiet, patrols brought in the ominous news that the enemy were once again along the Rœux-Gavrelle road. The day's casualties were 16—five other ranks killed, nine wounded and two missing. On April 11th orders came for the attack on the road just mentioned, with, if successful, a further effort against the line, Greenland Hill—Plouvain—River Scarpe, slightly elevated land which overlooked the marshy country surrounding Biache-St. Vaast. The Essex were in divisional reserve. The attack commenced at noon, but did not make much progress, the Seaforths suffering heavily from machine guns posted in Rœux chemical works. Many days of fierce and stubbornly contested fighting were needed before the village and chemical works were in our hands. At 5.10 p.m. the Essex sent "C" Company and two platoons of "A" Company to fill the gap between the 2nd Duke of Wellington's and the Irish Fusiliers, and the remainder of the Battalion was busily engaged reorganizing, with the Household Battalion and Somersets on the left and Lancashire Fusiliers on the right. Three other ranks were killed, eleven wounded and one missing. "From the high ground," wrote a combatant, "we could see something of the battle on the south side of the Scarpe, where we were endeavouring to take Monchy-le-Preux. We little knew then that among the cavalry in the attack were the Essex Yeomanry, who lost very heavily. There, during the following winter, the ribs of the fallen horses protruded above the surface of the ground. Pompadours who served there during the December of 1917 and January of 1918 will remember Dead Horse Corner."

During the night the South African Brigade arrived, preparatory to the withdrawal of the 4th Division on April 12th. Prior to that movement an officers' conference was held in Fampoux, at 9 a.m., and the Battalion suffered severe loss, for when returning therefrom the commanding officer, Lieut.-Colonel S. G. Mullock, was killed. Major N. M. S. Irwin, M.C., took over

command. "A" and "B" Companies and Battalion headquarters left for the line running from Athies to a high spot known as Le Point du Jour, on the wooded Arras-Gavrelle road, at 6.20 p.m., reaching it at 8 p.m. On the 13th the Battalion was in dug-outs near St. Nicolas and there was joined by "C" and "D" Companies at midnight on the 13th, these units having been attached to the Lancashire Fusiliers until the South African Brigade had consolidated. The casualties for the day were fairly heavy from shell-fire, 12 other ranks being killed, 14 wounded and two missing. In four days following the Battalion sent nearly 80 men to hospital.

On April 18th the Essex marched to the railway cutting near Athies in relief of the East Lancashires, but they were not there long, for two days later they were in Gouves, from whence they moved to Liencourt, near Frévent, on the 23rd. The next few days were spent in refitting and bathing, Brigadier-General Carton de Wiart paying a visit on the 24th, congratulating the Battalion upon its excellent behaviour in the battle of Arras. Then another move was made to Laresset camp, *en route* to Arras, from whence, on the 30th, the Essex marched to the front line near Rœux in relief of the 21st Northumberland Fusiliers. Upon this day it was announced six men had been awarded Military Medals for the part they had played in the capture of Fampoux.

THE LAST EFFORT AGAINST RŒUX.

May Day, 1917, found the Battalion once again near to the Rœux Chemical Works on the Arras front, with heavy artillery active on both sides. There was a good deal of sniping, which caused severe casualties, seven being killed and 18 wounded. Preparations went busily forward on the next day for a strenuous attack, the men in outlying posts having been brought in on the nights of April 30th and May 1st.

The operation of May 3rd, in which the 4th Division took part, was planned to aid an important movement by the French, two days later, against the Chemin des Dames. Sir Douglas Haig directed a considerable extension of his active front, which reached over sixteen miles. Whilst the Third and First Armies attacked from Fontaine-lez-Croisilles to Fresnoy, the Fifth Army launched a second effort upon the Hindenburg line in the neighbourhood of Bullecourt. There were substantial gains. The 4th Division had on its left the 9th Division, with the 17th Division in reserve. The former was expected to advance 2,500 yards, capture the northern portion of the village of Rœux (including the chemical works and station buildings) and the trenches on the high ground nearby, finally piercing the partially wired defences round Plouvain. "Not one of these operations in itself," wrote the Divisional Commander, "presented insuperable difficulties if taken deliberately. In planning a combined

operation the great difficulty lay in arranging a creeping barrage to suit the conflicting interests of the two divisions. This barrage had again to be co-ordinated with that of the flank Corps." The northern part of Rœux was a formidable obstacle. The group of houses called the chemical works lay on either side of the Gavrelle-Rœux road, the principal being the chateau, which had thick stone walls and extensive cellars. East of the buildings were two large factories and a quarry, the latter being the site of two dug-outs. Houses also lined the road to the cemetery and to Rœux. Behind the Château the Germans had constructed a strong point, protected by a wall of concrete 7ft. thick and served by four machine guns, which swept all the country behind the chateau up to the railway on the north and the cemetery on the south. This portion of the village had been assaulted on previous occasions, but so far the British troops employed had not been able to hold it. Movement over the forward slope of the Point du Jour-Fampoux spur or along the Scarpe valley was in full view of the enemy on Windmill Hill, and the assembly trenches could not be occupied in the daylight hours. The high ground which constituted the second objective sloped very steeply to the Scarpe, so that all ground behind the ridge was invisible. The difficulties to be overcome in taking the second and third lines were intensified by the railway running diagonally across the line of advance of the 4th Division, the rails being carried for several hundred yards east of the station on an embankment, with machine gun emplacements thereon, whilst beyond there was a deep cutting. Troops, which started north of the railway were, therefore, obliged to remain north. The 4th Division had to conform to the movements of the 9th Division, who were north of the railway line, and the instructions were that the portion of the Division on the north of the railway should form a defensive flank facing south along the railway cutting until the troops advancing south of the railway at a slower rate had got level with them.

The bombardment of Rœux was not as effective as was hoped and this fact had considerable influence upon the subsequent operations. The attack of the 4th Division was entrusted to the 10th and 12th Brigades, with the 11th Brigade in reserve. A battalion of the latter (1st Somersetshire Light Infantry) was placed under the orders of the 10th Brigade and the 1st Rifle Brigade were liable to be called upon by the 12th. The losses sustained by the Division in the taking of Fampoux had not been made good and the total strength available was 228 officers and 5,059 other ranks (12th Brigade 80 officers and 1,941 other ranks), from which, however, carrying parties and extra stretcher-bearers had to be provided. The casualties sustained upon this occasion (May 3rd) were very heavy, numbering 107 officers and 2,009 other ranks, the principal sufferers being the

12th Brigade, with 54 officers and 1,094 other ranks. The greater portion of the 12th Infantry Brigade attacked south of the railway line and details thereof reached a position overlooking Plouvain, but having lost all their officers and with flanks in the air, they were gradually overpowered, for the Château had not been taken and the machine guns from the strong point there and in the house north of the railway cut their communications, only a few posts being withdrawn.

The Essex were on the left, north of the railway line, with 9th Division on their left flank. At 3.45 a.m., under a heavy barrage, the men pushed forward to secure the ground to the left of the chemical works. "A" Company was on the left and "C" on the right, with "B" in support and "D" in reserve. The two leading companies were assailed by a desolating machine gun fire, which mowed them down in scores, and a like fate met "B" Company, when it gallantly strove to fill their places. The men made some progress in Crook and Crow trenches and possibly went farther in the smoke and darkness, but the confusion of conflict was increased by the right flank of the 9th Division coming across the front of the Essex. After vain endeavour for some time, it was realized at 5 a.m. that the attack upon this part of the line had failed, the enemy still holding the chemical works on the right and the 9th Division being unable to make way on the left. Lieut. St. G. Showers at this juncture organized the Battalion front line for resistance to a possible counter-attack with two platoons of "D" Company and details of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and 1st King's Own, 1st Rifle Brigade being brought up in close support during the afternoon.

At 10.30 a.m. and 2.20 p.m. the enemy counter-attacked from the direction of Delbar and Hansa Woods. The latter made some ground, first sweeping past the north of Rœux, then east of the Château, crossing the railway line near the station, reaching Crook and Crow and actually effecting a lodgment in Clover trench until they were bombed out of it. The remainder of the first wave took cover in the trenches north of the railway and in the railway cutting, whilst the second succumbed to the artillery fire directed upon it. An attack was ordered at 11 p.m. with a view to extricating any men surviving at the Château and beyond it. The 10th Brigade were able to establish a line of posts in advance of their original position from west of the cemetery to the River Scarpe, which posts they were able to maintain, but 1st Rifle Brigade (which had been attached to the 12th Brigade) did not make progress and so, with the exception of the ground gained by the 10th Brigade and a portion of Crook and Czar trenches, at 10.30 p.m. the Division was on its original line, having had twenty hours of continuous fighting under depressing conditions. The Divisional Commander ascribed the causes of the check to be (1) Inadequate preliminary bombardment ; (2) Distance and number

of objectives in view of the number of troops available; (8) Attempt to execute a night attack on a large scale without sufficient previous warning to enable the necessary precautions to be taken; (4) The pace of the barrage, which was calculated for a daylight operation and was too fast for a night operation; (5) Failure of moppers-up to carry out their task in the darkness. Thus the 4th Division did not achieve the sanguine programme mapped out for it and it was not until May 11th that it captured Rœux cemetery and chemical works, the 51st Division completing the good work on the night of the 13th-14th by securing possession of Rœux.

The losses of the Essex were heavy, totalling 207 non-commissioned officers and men, of whom 106 were given as missing, most of whom were later reported as killed. Of the 14 officers returned either as killed, wounded or missing, 2nd Lieuts. L. W. Croager, P. H. Evans, E. M. Forster and J. Powley were in the first-named category.

On May 4th the Essex moved back to support positions and the 12th Brigade, owing to its casualties, closed in to a battalion front. Five officers arrived from the depot Battalion to replace Essex losses. There was little to report for the next day or two. 2nd Lieut. G. F. W. Taylor was killed on the 5th. There was heavy shelling for a quarter of an hour on May 8th, caused by burying parties moving about above ground. Then the Essex went back to the German fourth system, which had been penetrated in the first rush a month before. The Brigade were in support (with Essex right resting on the Athies-Fampoux road), when the 11th Brigade made a most successful attack on the chemical works and at night the Essex were near the front line, with the Battalion headquarters in a cellar in Fampoux. The success was further exploited in the early morning of the 12th May, when the 10th and 11th Brigades made further progress west of the chemical works. The Essex were notified that they might have to move up in support of 1st Hampshires, but nothing further transpired, and at midnight the Battalion had concentrated at the transport lines in readiness to be conveyed by 'buses to billets in Maizières the next day. During this period of front line service only four officers came out with the Battalion of the 25 who had marched in. The losses on the last day (12th) were considerable, 2nd Lieut. G. F. Barker and five other ranks being killed, whilst two officers and 14 other ranks were wounded.

Small reinforcing parties joined the Battalion and Captain S. N. E. O'Halloran took command upon Major N. M. S. Irwin going on leave, Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson resuming charge of the Battalion on May 31st. The 30th Brigade sports were held in a field near Penin and the Essex carried off the long jump (Lance-Corporal Cross), high jump (Corporal Sparrow), 220 yards (Lance-Corporal Cross), obstacle race blindfold and squad drill.

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This animal was alternately pack pony and Colonel's charger, and as the former was a constant prize winner at Divisional Horse Shows.

June opened with the 4th Division horse show near Gouy-en-Artois, and the Battalion produced the best pack pony. More strenuous efforts were made to increase the strength of the Essex, for 157 reported in four days and then on the 7th came warning orders that the 12th Brigade would move to Arras, *en route* to the line again. Accordingly the Essex found themselves billeted in the citadel at Arras on June 10th, marching to the support line the next day, and then, on the 12th, reaching a group of dug-outs 200 yards east of the old German front line. By the 15th they were before the enemy again, this time in the vicinity of Rœux, the principal occupation being the despatch of patrols to exactly locate the German position. A company of the 3/4th Queen's was attached for instruction on the 18th, and the following day came relief by 1st Warwicks, who marched in from Fampoux lock. Blangy Park was occupied during the rest period, there being bathing in the lake, a constant dribble to hospital and incessant demands for working parties.

The Battalion had experience of a new portion of the Arras sector on the 28th, when it relieved 7th Suffolks, in support, to the left of Monchy, the chief incident of the occupation of this part of the line being a welcome to a working party of the 9th Essex on fatigue duty.

THE RAID ON ARROW TRENCH.

The men were in the front line on July 2nd. True to their reputation, the 2nd Essex instantly set about improving trenches and on the 4th tried to ascertain what was proceeding in Arrow Trench, some 250 yards long, which ran south-east and north-west across the Monchy-Pelves road, being "T'd" north and south for about thirty yards each way at the northern end. The night was too light to enable the attempt to succeed. A patrol of an officer and three men made another effort the next night, but, unfortunately, were bombed by a German party, which assailed them from behind, with the result that the officer and N.C.O. were wounded. The object of the enterprise was achieved, however, for a corporal stayed behind in a shellhole until daylight and upon return was able to give a detailed account of his observation.

The information thus obtained on July 5th was exploited by the Battalion after its return to the front line on the night of 12th-13th July. The leader of the raiding party was 2nd Lieut. C. H. Stanley and the section commanders were Sergeant Goodall and Corporal Russell, each having seven men with him. The trench was in bad repair and unoccupied, except at the "T'd" end, where there was a machine gun with four men, the former being withdrawn by day. Fifteen yards south of the machine gun there was an infantry post, with shelter, garrisoned by six men. Sergeant Goodall's section was detailed to enter the

machine gun post, capture the gun, kill the crew and search the bodies for papers, whilst Corporal Russell's section was to effect the same purpose with respect to the infantry post and to bomb the shelter. The raiding party went over without equipment or any marks of identification, having fixed bayonets, ten rounds of ammunition in the magazines of the rifles and ten in breast pockets. Two Mills' bombs per man were also carried, each raider of the infantry post also taking with him a "P" bomb. The men crawled out of Halberd trench due west of the objective at 12.31 a.m., in file, with an interval of ten yards between sections; when within fifty yards of the trench the party extended into line and crawled forward until they came to rushing distance. Everything went well and according to time table, but the raid was without result, for the trench was found to have been evacuated by the enemy, though two Germans were seen to retire from a point some distance to the right of the "T" head. After five minutes' occupation the men were recalled by the firing of blue flares and the notes of a bugle from the front line, the withdrawal being covered by the 12th Brigade Machine Gun Company and the 12th Trench Mortar Battery, whilst two Lewis guns searched the flanks of the objective. The only sign of enemy activity was observed after the flares went up, when intermittent machine gun fire was directed along the front. The whole operation occupied half an hour.

Upon relief by 1st Hampshires the Battalion marched to Blangy Park on July 14th, and the monotony of training and providing working parties was varied by aquatic sports in the lake, the chief attraction being climbing the greasy pole, a popular event at all Essex coast town regattas. The Battalion was in brigade reserve on July 29th, there being constant arrivals of fresh officers and small parties of men.

A COSTLY OPERATION.

August, 1917, found the Battalion still in brigade reserve in Blangy Park, near Arras, supplying working parties and practising for a raid. On the 7th the Essex relieved the Duke of Wellington's in the front line and two days later a party of 180, together with 80 men of the Duke of Wellington's, raided the enemy's trenches in two places, the operation being in conjunction with a more ambitious effort by the 12th Division on the right. The object was to capture or kill as many of the enemy as possible, with a view to identifying enemy formations, though the General Staff had also probably in mind support of the offensive, known as the Third Battle of Ypres, which was then in full vigour. At 7.41 p.m. the raiders crawled out of the trench on to the ridge in front and at 7.45 p.m. they advanced under protection of a creeping barrage, which was not sufficiently intense for the purpose. Heavy machine gun fire was almost immediately encountered and

enemy parties also leapt the parapet and formed a bombing barrage. The raiding party were forced to retire, having suffered 83 casualties. The seven officers with the party were included in the list, of whom Captain S. N. E. O'Halloran, Lieut. St. G. Showers and 2nd Lieut. A. J. Bennett were killed.

Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Pratt, D.S.O., resumed command of the Battalion on August 10th. In consequence of patrols reporting that the enemy were cutting their wire a standing patrol was sent out on the 15th and remained there all day. In the evening the Battalion was relieved by the 1st Hampshires and marched to Blangy Park again. Strenuous training still proceeded. As an illustration, while "A" Company were instructed in the art of sand bagging, "B" Company were firing on the range and "C" and "D" Companies were practising attack in open warfare. On August 21st came a move to the Tilloy area, and the day after Major N. M. S. Irwin, M.C., left to take over command of the 2nd Lincolns. Blangy Park was seen again on the 25th and here Captain A. E. Maitland, M.C., departed to become second-in-command of the 3/10th Middlesex. At the end of August the Battalion was at Wilderness Camp and the day before the 8th K.O.S.B. were relieved, on the night of September 3rd, the 12th Infantry Brigade won the divisional aquatic sports. This tour of the line was very quiet and on being relieved on September 8th the Battalion marched to Hendecourt. Waiting there was a reinforcement of 71 other ranks.

Active service was once more in view for the 4th Division and on September 20th the 12th Brigade marched to Beaumetz and entrained there for Swindon Camp, Peselhoek, one mile north of Poperinghe. Seven days later the men again entrained at International Corner for Elverdinghe, *en route* for Hull's Farm Camp. Whilst there a large working party was found to dig a cable trench in the forward area, a task upon which they were complimented by the Divisional Commander. Then, on October 1st, the familiar Caribou Camp was reached again, and here also working parties were required to improve accommodation on the Canal Bank and to carry trench and duck boards. A change of scene occurred once more on October 4th, when Caribou Camp was exchanged for Leipzig Camp.

THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES: FIGHTING IN RAIN AND MUD NEAR HOUTHULST FOREST.

The Third Battle of Ypres was drawing to its close. Though the weather had broken, Sir Douglas Haig pressed the attack and by the end of the month Passchendaele, the highest point of the ridge, had been taken and the salient flattened out. There was desperate fighting ere that feat was accomplished, in which the 4th Division (Major-General T. G. Matheson) played its usual gallant part. Early in October the 4th was stationed well to

the left of the line, having only the 29th Division on its left. The latter was astride the Ypres-Staden railway and the 4th Division was beyond Langemarck, facing the road which ran to Houthulst Forest from Poelcappelle. On the right was the 11th Division operating to the left of the latter village, and the line of assaulting divisions stretched thence as far as Gheluvelt. As a result of the movement the British line was established along the main ridge for 9,000 yards. On the extreme left the advance was most satisfactory, for the three divisions (29th, 4th and 11th) all reached their objectives, the two latter storming the western half of Poelcappelle, including the church. Notwithstanding the bad state of the weather, the British Commander-in-Chief decided to press still further forward and although the 12th Brigade was not involved in the contest on October 4th, it was fully employed in the obstinate encounter of October 9th, when British troops established themselves on the outskirts of Houthulst Forest. On this occasion, also, advance was most marked on the left, the 29th and 4th Divisions making "equal progress along the Ypres-Staden railway and securing a line to the east of Poelcappelle-Houthulst Road." Stiff fighting took place around certain strong points, in the course of which a hostile counter-attack was repulsed. The weather conditions were appalling. "The last stages of the Third Battle of Ypres," writes Buchan, "were probably the muddiest combats ever known in the history of war."

The attack, on October 9th, of the 4th Division (with 11th Division on the right and 29th Division on the left) was entrusted to the 12th Brigade, with the 10th in support and 11th in reserve. The Essex were on the right, with 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers on the left, the 2nd Duke of Wellington's being in support, with 1st King's Own in reserve; Brigade headquarters were in Langemarck. The object was to push between Poelcappelle on the right and the Ypres-Staden railway on the left, beyond the Poelcappelle-Houthulst road linking the two points. "A" and "B" Companies of the Essex led, with "C" in support and "D" in reserve. Just before zero hour (5.20 a.m.) the British artillery put down a very heavy stationary barrage for four minutes and then started to creep along at a rate of 100 yards in ten minutes. As the men went over they encountered severe rifle and machine gun fire from a point near the railway. In the early stages both Lieut.-Colonel A. G. Pratt and the Adjutant went down wounded, also the commanders of "A" and "C" Companies. The first objective was taken and then the left was held up by machine gun fire from blockhouses (pill-boxes) at the north-east end of Poelcappelle, which had remained unsubdued owing to the advance of the 11th Division being stayed. Moreover, a gap of 200 yards separated the two divisions. Progress was resumed for some hundreds of yards and then the Battalion, short of the final objective, organized

among the shell holes against counter-attack. The casualties were severe, 17 officers being hit, of whom seven were killed or died of wounds, viz., Captain L. W. L. Cadic, M.C., Captain R. H. Lowe, 2nd Lieuts. G. P. Hobbs, W. L. Thompson, F. W. Legg, H. A. Keell and W. A. Ilieve. A separate list for the 9th is not available, but between the 9th and 14th 274 other ranks were returned as casualties, including 42 killed, 144 wounded, 25 missing, four "gassed," three wounded and remained on duty and 56 to hospital. The enemy barrage was five minutes late in coming down or the losses would probably have been still heavier.

The Battalion remained on the sodden ground it had won for the night, the hours of darkness being spent in reorganization. Touch was regained, too, with the division on the right. No counter-attack was made, although a good deal of enemy movement had been visible near to Requette Farm. With daylight came relief by the Household Battalion, though comfort was not to be had, for the Battalion occupied waterlogged shellholes in support. 2nd Lieut. F. W. Gilbert was killed during the relief. Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson again assumed command of the Battalion on October 10th. The men suffered so considerably from shell-fire on the 11th that the position was moved to 200 yards south of the Poelcappelle - Houthulst road. That same night the Essex were relieved by 1st Rifle Brigade and went into divisional reserve. They were not called upon for the attack on October 12th, although two other battalions of the 12th Brigade were employed. Then, in company with the 29th, the 4th Division made substantial progress along the Ypres-Staden railway, whereat the troops again displayed "remarkable gallantry, steadfastness and endurance in circumstances of extreme hardship."

The Essex were resting and cleaning up at Porchester Camp on October 14th and also received reinforcements from Herzelee. There were constant evacuations to hospital at this period and the Battalion was probably not sorry when orders came for Arras once more. In the early morning of the 19th the Essex marched eastward and they later entrained for Aubigny, moving thence to billets in Gouves. Life was quiet save for "mumps," and then came the route for Arras, where the 4th Gordons were relieved in brigade reserve. With the last day of October came the presentation of several Military Medal ribbons. On relief by 2nd Duke of Wellington's the Battalion marched, on November 4th, 1917, to Schramm Barracks, Arras.

ACTIVITY NEAR MONCHY-LE-PREUX.

The 1st Hampshires were relieved by the Essex in the right sub-sector of the Monchy sector on the afternoon of November 8th—"C" and "D" Companies in the front line, "A" in support and "B" in reserve; later on "A" and "B" were

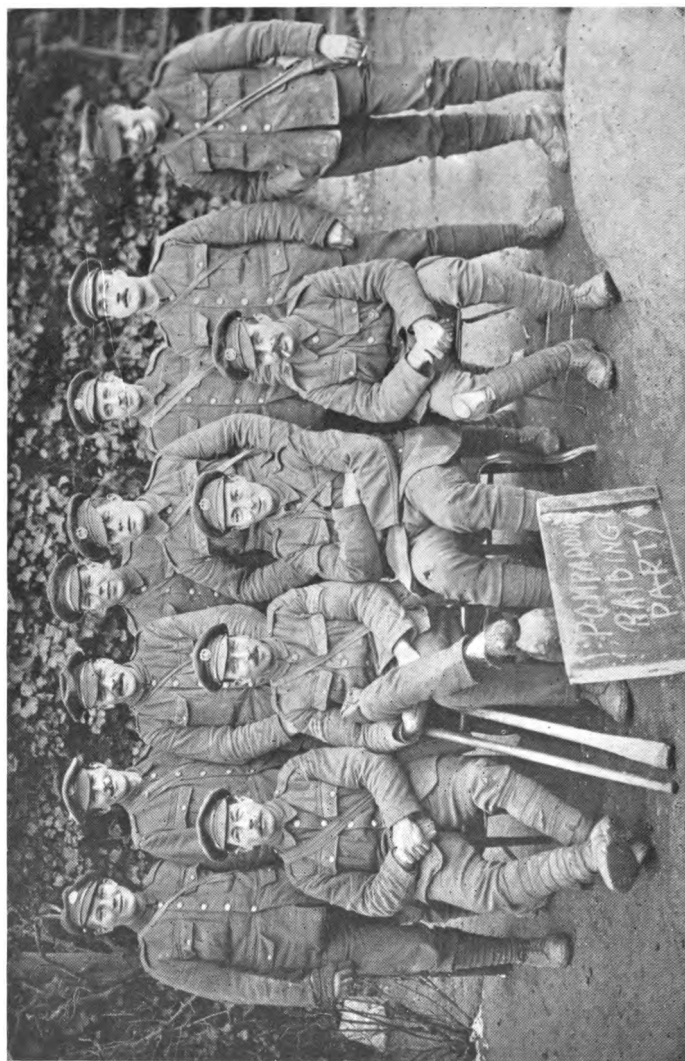
both in support, each with a platoon pushed up in close support. There was heavy rain on the night of the 10th, which damaged the trenches and caused much extra work. Night patrols were frequently out, but otherwise there was not much activity, and on the 12th the Battalion went into corps reserve, with headquarters in a quarry near Feuchy Chapel cross-roads. The Essex were quickly in the line again, this time in front of Monchy, a raid being made by Lancashire Fusiliers on the left on the same night as the relief (16th). A smoke screen was released, in retaliation for which the Germans sent down a scattered and weak barrage. There were successful raids by other troops on November 18th, 19th and 20th, the general impression being that the enemy were contemplating retirement in this sector. Upon relief on the 21st the Battalion went to Monchy defences and then, on the 24th, to Arras and, therefore, took no part in the Battle of Cambrai, for they were in Arras until November passed out.

The first day of December was marked by a presentation of medal ribbons by the Corps Commander at the Butte de Tir. The next day the Battalion was in the line in the left sub-sector of the Monchy area, "C" and "D" Companies in the front and "A" and "B" in support. There was concentrated enemy artillery and trench mortar fire on the support and reserve trenches for an hour in the early morning of the 5th. The day after the Battalion left the 2nd Duke of Wellington's in charge and proceeded to Bois des Bœufs in reserve. Whilst there warning was received that the enemy had determined to retake the Hindenburg Line and instructions were given for instant readiness when the alarm came. The task of making concertina barbed wire coils was varied by an entertainment by the Black Diamond concert party from Arras, assisted by the Drums, and service in the Church Army tent. When Captain P. Parry travelled to Amiens to buy articles for Christmas festivities, the Battalion relieved their comrades of the Duke of Wellington's in the front line and were there until December 15th without incident. Later came a trench raid by an officer and detachment of "C" Company.

A GALLANT EXPLOIT.

In the early afternoon of December 21st 2nd Lieut. G. W. Miller and 20 other ranks executed a daring raid in front of saps four and five, which had been thoroughly rehearsed a day or two before in the transport lines. The operation was at first most successful. The object was to capture German prisoners and to do as much damage as possible to the enemy's trenches and dug-outs. Upon arrival at the enemy first line the trench was found to be badly knocked about, being very shallow and only about 3ft. deep in places. Determined to capture a live prisoner, the party pressed on with ardour, but saw no enemy. They, unfortunately, came within range of their own barrage,

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Survivors of a Daylight Raid, December 21st 1917. Sergt. Manning in charge. (Note the clothing torn by contact with the wire).

with the result that the officer and five others were given as missing and three others were wounded. The first named were subsequently reported killed, for a party which went out in the early morning of the next day could not find any trace of the officer or of his comrades.

"At that time," writes Sergeant Manning, "the Battalion was out at rest in Pick Caves on the Arras front, and mostly employed as working parties. On the night of 17th December C.S.M. West detailed twenty of us to prepare for a raiding party and we proceeded to St. Nicholas for three days' training. The party consisted of an officer, sergeant, corporal and 18 men. The raid was arranged to take place at 12.45 p.m. on the 21st, the object being to penetrate into the German lines as far as possible to seek information and to capture a prisoner. On the morning of the day of the raid we went to Pick Caves, where we were stripped of anything that might lead to our identity and were given an identity disc bearing a number only (from one to twenty). On assembling in the front line trench we were split up into three squads and given orders to advance on the first shell being fired of the creeping barrage that was to cover and support us in our advancement and retirement. To our surprise, the German first line was unoccupied and, continuing, we discovered the second line also empty, with the exception of a few posts concealed in dug-outs, the entrances to which we could not discover, although we had good cause to know they were there. Carrying on to the third line, we came up to the enemy in force and the fun commenced. Owing to our inability to quickly get in touch with the Germans, we were much behind time and the barrage began to creep back and, consequently, we were between our own fire and the barrage the Germans put down. I was in charge of the squad in the centre and had lost touch with the squad on the left, but remained in touch with the other squad under Lieut. Miller, with six men. He signalled me to retire to our own lines and shortly after commencing to do so I saw a shell burst right amongst Lieut. Miller's squad. Although we could not get near them, it appeared as though all of them were killed, which later proved to be the case. The shelling and rifle-fire were so intense that it was impossible to control a party and it became a case of every man for himself. We all made for our own lines, which the survivors reached—twelve, I believe—having been away for over twenty-five minutes. I scrambled through with a fractured ankle. After reassembling at battalion headquarters we were sent to Arras for a rest."

G.O.C. 4th Division very highly praised the manner in which the raid was undertaken, for he wrote to the commanding officer: "I watched your raid at 1 p.m. to-day through my telescope and I wish to congratulate you and your battalion on the magnificent effort they made. It did me good to watch them go over. Nothing could have been better than the way they sprang out

of the trench together. I am most awfully sorry those poor fellows were killed. I fear it was from our own artillery and I fancy I saw it happen. Our artillery were not, however, to blame; it was due to the keenness and magnificent spirit of the men of your regiment, as they pushed on too close to the barrage line. Of course, they went too far, but it was a fine sight; they striving all they could to find a Hun somewhere. I shall never forget the sight and congratulate you most heartily on commanding such splendid fellows."

The Battalion afterwards went into reserve in Arras and the active training comprised musketry, physical training, bayonet fighting, revolver practice and also boot repairing. Christmas Day was spent in preparation for the trenches once more; this time in the left sub-sector, where the men were busy wiring saps. Lieut.-Colonel Thompson went to hospital on the 28th and two days later the Essex were in reserve again, welcoming 1918 in the old Hindenburg Line, with headquarters in Feuchy Chapel quarry. A bathe at Tilloy was a welcome change from the manufacture of concertina wire. Major J. W. Watkins was attached as commanding officer on January 3rd, upon which day the Battalion relieved the Duke of Wellington's. The next evening there was an enemy alarm, for at 10 o'clock the Germans put down a heavy barrage on the front and support line. The "S.O.S." signal went up six minutes later, to be met exactly a minute afterwards by artillery fire on the threatened position, the Lewis gunners being already busily engaged. No enemy were seen in the Essex sector, but the nature of the bombardment pointed to a raid upon some part of the line. Three were killed and three wounded. In all the slush and muddiness of a thaw, the Battalion ushered in the Duke of Wellington's and by 12.30 p.m. on January 7th was in support in Monchy defences, when Lieut.-Colonel Thompson resumed command. The 1st Rifle Brigade took over on the 11th and then all available men were used for the next three nights to construct a new trench, which was completed to time ere the Battalion moved by route march to Arras on the 15th. Re-clothing and refitting were the order of the day until the Essex left by 'buses on January 19th for Feuchy Chapel cross-roads and entered the front line again on the night of the 19th. There they remained until dusk on the 23rd, when they moved to the south of the Arras-Cambrai road. But not for long, however, and on January 27th they relieved their old friends of the Duke of Wellington's, who in turn took the places of the Essex on February 1st.

The Battalion went into support at Les Fosses Farm and then came a divisional relief whereby the Essex were succeeded by service battalions of the Gordons, Seaforths and Camerons. By 'bus to Arras, thence to Schramm Barracks the Battalion proceeded by route march to Berneville Camp, on February 6th, for

systematic training. Efforts were again made to re-establish the Battalion strength, for the reinforcing drafts for some weeks had been limited to a score or two of men. Over 250 men now joined in eight days. A great deal of attention was also being paid to shooting and there was much interest in an A.R.A. competition on February 12th, which was won by No. 10 platoon, with No. 11 platoon in the second place. The former took part in a brigade contest on the 26th, but, unfortunately, the Lewis gun jammed and the Essex lost. They were not more fortunate with the football match in the divisional semi-final, when the West Yorkshire Pioneers beat them 2—1. There was greater satisfaction with the result of a friendly game with the Lancashire Fusiliers, when the Battalion won 6—0, and, moreover, the same evening, secured two places in the divisional rounds of the boxing tournament. The weather was wet and unpleasant and there were constant transfers to hospital.



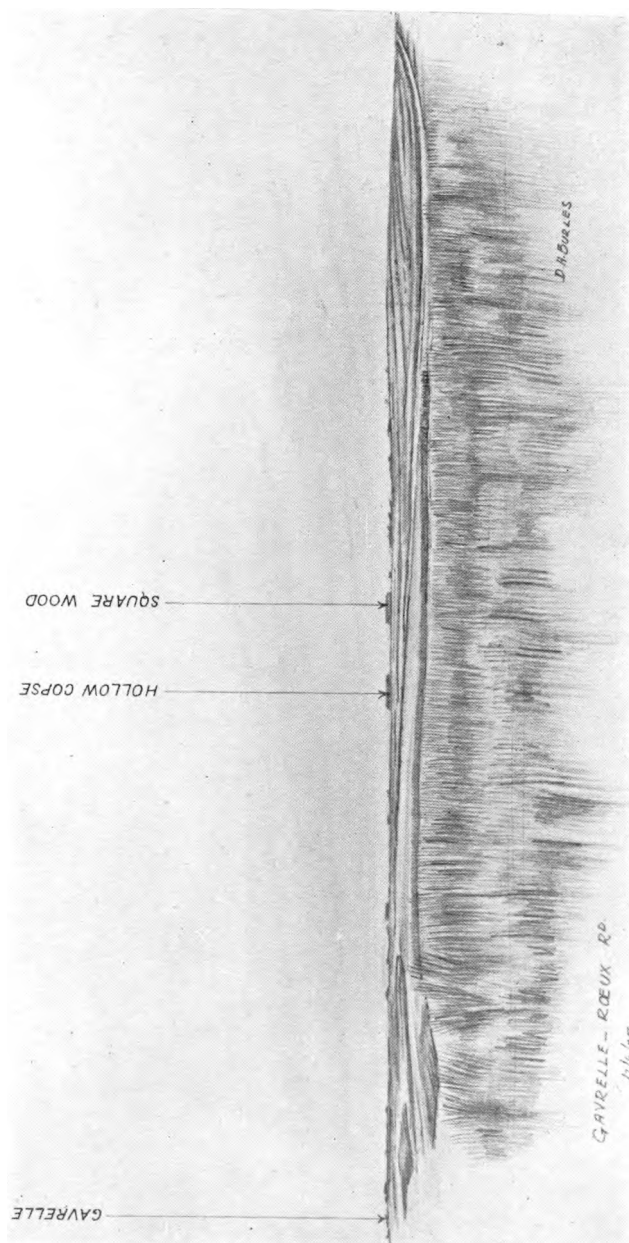
THE BREAKING OF THE STORM.

The 4th Division stayed at Berneville until March 11th and then went back to Arras, being billeted in the Museum. The enemy were active ; an offensive was prophesied, and there was constant vigilance. As early as the 12th the Battalion was ordered to "stand-by" to repulse an expected attack. On the 13th a move was made to the Prison, and training went on with great vigour, there being constant firing practice on Wailly range or the Butte de Tir. Tension was increasing when the Essex relieved the 1st Coldstreams in support on March 19th—"A" Company being in Chicken Trench, "B" in Hudson, "C" in Hussar and "D" in Harry. Four days later 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers took the place of the Battalion, which relieved the 1st King's Own near Rœux. Orders came for the trenches to be evacuated on March 24th, but these were cancelled later in the day. The enemy were expected to attack at dawn on the 26th—the day on which Foch became Commander-in-Chief—and the Essex "stood to" for five hours, from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m., but there was no hostile movement. There was an enemy raid on the Battalion on the right, but the former were unable to enter the trenches. Then on the 28th came the great crash. The enemy offensive surged up to the Arras sector and involved the Essex in that critical conflict.

MARCH 28th AND WHAT BEFELL THE ESSEX THAT DAY.

The German offensive of March, 1918, was one of the greatest military movements in the history of the war. It had been long in planning and preparation. Months before the Germans were moving up all the troops that could be spared to "establish—at least temporarily, until the strong American reinforcements were added to the Allies—a balance of forces in the western theatre of war, or, if possible, a preponderance on the German side. This would allow the necessary time for rest and training. To this end German division after division and battery after battery had been rolling up since the end of 1917 from Italy and the East into France. A number of heavy Austro-Hungarian batteries were also brought up. Finally, 62 divisions and 1,706 batteries were made available for the main attack."¹ The plans for the offensive were laid down by the German Supreme Command on January 24th, 1918. The initial effort was directed against the projecting southern sector of the British front, thus bringing the clash of arms once again to the devastated district of the Somme. Supporting this attack were similar enterprises to be undertaken a few days later on the right and left. "The enemy

1. "Encyclopædia Britannica," p. 516, Vol. 32.



Sketch of the Ground upon which the Battalion stayed the German advance, March 28th., 1918.

divisions were organized in groups, usually three lines deep, the first line being made the strongest in order to ensure rapid results at the beginning. The first line advanced close up to the front trenches on March 20th, the second standing at a distance of 8-5 km., and the third 7-10 km. behind. The hindermost lines were looked upon as reserves for the Higher Command. They were not simply to follow up the others, but to be fetched up according to the needs of the tactical situation."¹ The blow was struck at 9.40 a.m. on March 21st, after a three hours' artillery bombardment, which had been in turn preceded by gas emissions, and fell upon the Third (left) and Fifth British Armies. The left flank of the Third Army from Bullecourt to Arras was not at first affected. Seven days later it was attacked, but it refused to be dislodged. On the right the Germans were more fortunate and made rapid progress for a time. By April 5th they had swept past Bapaume and through Miraumont; had broken into Albert and stormed in sight of Amiens; whilst farther south they had once again entered Montdidier, Noyon and Chauny. By April 24th the enemy had exhausted his effort in this area; he staggered forward at Villers-Bretonneux, but could do no more, though in the month's fighting "he had more than made good the ground lost in 1916 and had captured—apart from enormous booty—90,000 prisoners and 1,200 guns."² This penetration of our line caused much anxiety, but it was realized afterwards that this great effort which seemed so successful, in fact, produced a state of exhaustion in men and munitions which led later to defeat. On April 9th the offensive had been extended to the Lys and some progress was made from Langemarck to La Bassée, particularly in the neighbourhood of Armentières, and before it died down at the end of the month the Germans had again come close to Ypres and had broken past Mont Kemmel, Bailleul and Merville ere they were forced to a standstill. Their extraordinary effort to break the Allied armies finally failed and the investment continued, but August had dawned before the Entente reacted and commenced that wonderful movement which did not halt until it reached the banks of the Rhine.

When the German offensive opened on March 21st the Essex, with the 4th Division, were lying about Rœux, north of the River Scarpe, on the extreme left of the Third Army, and having to the left of them at Gavrelle the 56th Division of the First Army. The ground immediately north of the Scarpe, held by the 4th Division, had as its back area the high land round Point du Jour, which is really the southern extremity of the Vimy Ridge. From this point the ground slopes steeply towards the south to form the Scarpe Valley. Towards the last the downward slope is gentle, with a slightly marked spur in the centre, which, after

1. "Encyclopædia Britannica," p. 517, Vol. 32.

2. "Encyclopædia Britannica," p. 519, Vol. 32.

crossing our front trenches, widens out and again rises to form the underfeature known as Greenland Hill, which constituted part of the German trench system. Near Rœux is another underfeature called Mount Pleasant. Lying just behind our front line trenches immediately north of the Scarpe, it deflects the river round its southern slopes. This hill was of considerable value, as it hid our portion of the Scarpe Valley, thus enabling supplies to be transported by road and water down the valley to our front line trenches. Further, the caves in this hill, lighted by electricity, afforded excellent accommodation for the supports and reserves in this sector. Speaking generally, the defensive arrangements were far more advanced than in most areas. The chalky soil, though rendering the trenches visible from the air, kept them dry, except in the forward zone, and even there they dried out quickly. The ground also enabled a considerable number of dug-outs to be constructed, many being of German origin. During the winter shell-proof strong-posts, with all-round defence and machine gun emplacements, had been provided in the forward zone. In their rear switches, viz., trenches and entanglements running diagonally across the general system, had been made to restrict local penetration.

South of the Scarpe were the 15th Division and to their right the 3rd Division. Fighting had been proceeding for a week farther south before divisions of Prince Rupprecht's army group were sent against the defenders of Arras. Five divisions were detailed for the operation north of the Scarpe under the general command of the I Bavarian Reserve Corps, and the weight of whose assault fell upon the British 4th and 56th Divisions. South of the Scarpe four enemy divisions, under the general command of the III Bavarian and IX Reserve Corps, pushed against the 3rd and 15th Divisions, there being sympathetic action along the whole front southwards to beyond Bucquoy. This German effort resulted in the seizure of Gavrelle and Rœux north of the Scarpe, but in all else was negative of result, the brilliant resistance of the British troops preventing further access to Arras. The security of this city was an important consideration, but more important still was the denial to the enemy of his extension of front whereby he hoped to sweep past Vimy once more, thus confining him to the vulnerable salient in the south, with its deepest point near Amiens.

Between Rœux and Gavrelle, where the 4th Division lay, the enemy advance in the early morning of March 28th was raked at point blank range by 15 pounder guns, which had been placed close to the front line and the crews of which were later able, after firing all their ammunition and destroying the guns, to get away safely on bicycles along the main Douai road to Arras. The enemy's infantry advanced almost shoulder to shoulder and were heavily engaged by the machine gunners. In his despatch the British Commander-in-Chief wrote: "The

weight and momentum of his assault and courage of his infantry, who sought to cut their way through our wire by hand under fire of our machine guns, sufficed to carry the enemy through the gaps which his bombardment had made in our outpost line. Thereafter, raked by the fire of our outposts, whose garrisons turned their machine guns and shot at the enemy's advancing lines from flank and rear, and met by an accurate and intense fire from all arms, his troops were everywhere stopped and thrown back with the heaviest loss before our battle positions. A second attack launched late in the afternoon north of the Scarpe, after a further period of bombardment, was also repulsed at all points. At the end of the day our battle positions astride the Scarpe were intact on the whole front of the attack, and in the evening successful strokes enabled us to push out a new outpost line in front of them. Meanwhile, the surviving garrisons of our original outpost line, whose most gallant resistance had played so large a part in breaking up the enemy's attack, had fought their way back through the enemy, though a party of the 2nd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, 4th Division, remained cut off until successfully withdrawn during the night."

The method adopted by the Division prior to the attack was to evacuate the front line of the first system by day and to reoccupy it at night, the support line being the battle line. The three Brigades of the Division were in line—10th on the right, 11th in the centre and 12th on the left in touch with the 56th Division. The 11th and 12th Brigades had a battalion in front, another in support and the third in reserve, whilst the 10th Brigade, astride the Scarpe, had a battalion in the peninsula at Rœux formed by the bend of the river, with the Arras-Douai railway as the base line, another in the front line south of the Scarpe and the third, also south of the Scarpe, in reserve. The enemy commenced a heavy bombardment of the British trenches at 3 a.m. on March 28th, apparently concentrated against the third system, with a heavier note on the north than on the south of the Scarpe. The infantry attack upon the 4th division began soon after 7 a.m., when the ordinary means of communication between Division and Brigades had been cut and could only be maintained by pigeons, wireless or runners. News came through, however, that the enemy had penetrated the divisional front and that the leading battalions were falling back, though resisting tenaciously, and by 9 a.m. they were holding the brigade reserve line. An emergency brigade was formed under the C.R.E., consisting of three field companies, R.E., Pioneers' Battalion and a provisional battalion made up of men left in the transport lines and at 10.5 the three field companies were moved into the army line north of the Scarpe, from the river to the Point du Jour, and the Pioneers were stationed on the south bank. By this time the division on the right had fallen back to the army line in front of Arras and at 10.25 news came that the enemy had penetrated

almost to the divisional reserve line on the left, about Blangy St. Laurent. At 12.30 four companies of the provisional battalion were hurried to the army line north of the Scarpe with orders for a company to push along the Athies-Fampoux road with the object of driving back any of the enemy who might have entered by the line of the river. The right was in movement for some time. The 10th Brigade reported at 2 p.m. that it had also reached the army line in conformity with the division on its right, though by this time the enemy offensive was far spent. The battalion holding the peninsula formed by the Scarpe and the Arras-Douai railway was compelled to evacuate this position by reason of the withdrawal south of the river and it formed a defensive flank facing south-east along the railway. This brigade then held fast and even advanced again somewhat later in the day. At 8 p.m. the remnants of the 11th and 12th Brigades, which had been holding out in Hussar, Humid and Harry trenches, were withdrawn to the line from Fampoux Lock, along Stoke Avenue, Hudson and Trent trenches. The losses of the Division in men and material were considerable, but they had resisted the formidable attempt to break through. About 60 officers and 1,800 other ranks were returned as casualties, whilst 50 machine guns (mostly in nests whence they could not be removed), 39 Lewis guns and 11 Stokes mortars were left behind; two anti-tank guns and four 6in. mortars were destroyed according to orders after being used to the last. To fully realize the situation which had developed, the fortunes of the 15th Division on the right and of the 56th Division on the left must also be followed. The former, astride the Cambrai road, had been forced back to the army line, the enemy penetrating as far as the Feuchy Chapel Road. To meet this threat the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division formed a defensive flank facing right. The attack struck the 56th Division at the same hour as the 4th Division, 7.5 a.m., and by 10.30 a.m. the right Brigade, 169th, fighting stiffly, had gone back to the Bailleul-Willerval Line, in the second system, where it stuck. A fierce blow was delivered at the spot where the 56th and 4th Divisions joined and the Queen's Westminsters were able to hold on to Naval Trench from their southern boundary up to the Gavrelle Road and by the aid of the London Rifle Brigade, on the left, and the Lancashire Fusiliers (12th Brigade, 4th Division), on the right, the enemy was held off, but increasing pressure on both flanks soon rendered this position untenable and the Germans gradually worked round to the right rear. It would seem that the enemy made his supreme effort in this sector upon the left of the 4th Division, including the whole front of the 12th Brigade and the right of the 56th Division, and by penetrating on both flanks of the 12th Brigade was able to make some progress, but the resistance encountered was so gallant and well sustained that he was unable to get through. The report of the 56th Division describes an ingenious method



LIEUT.-COLONEL R. N. THOMPSON, who commanded the Battalion, March 28th, 1918.

of advance adopted by the enemy during an attack later in the day. The men threw their rifles into the nearest shell-hole, held up their hands as if in surrender and then ran forward and dropped down alongside their weapons.

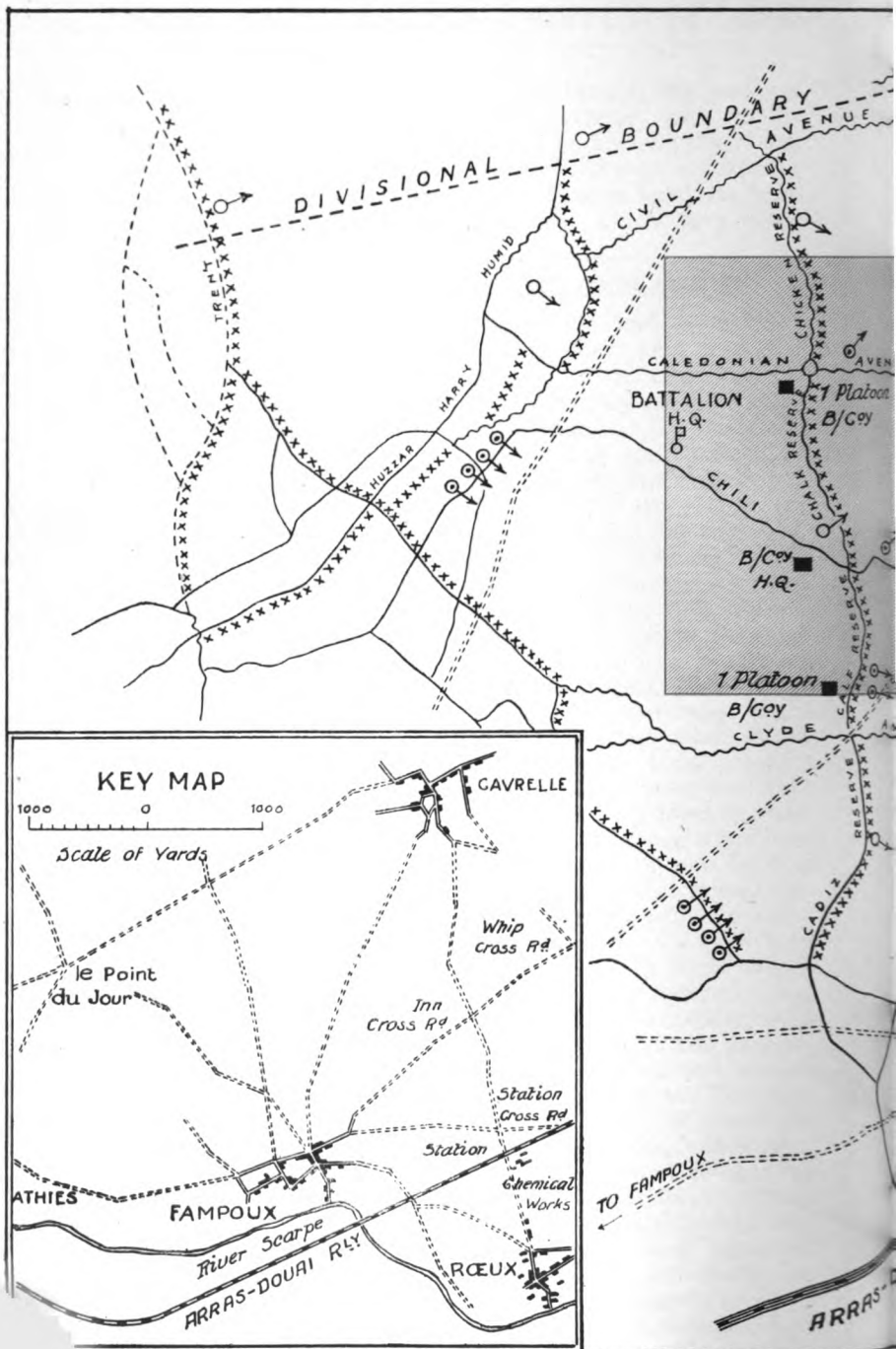
POSITION OF THE 12th BRIGADE.

The 12th Brigade had the Essex in the front line, Lancashire Fusiliers in support and the King's Own in reserve. The Brigade thus occupied no more than a battalion front, but it had a depth of three battalions, and, as the day's events proved, that was sufficient to hold up the enemy offensive. The total casualties were estimated at 785 and these were distributed as follows: 2nd Essex, 475; 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 250; 1st King's Own, 60. The war diaries of the battalions give their losses as 481, 228 and about 75 respectively. The ratio of casualties shows that the brunt of the blow was borne by the Essex, that it fell heavily, but less severely, upon the Lancashire Fusiliers, in support, and that, having regard to the total losses, the King's Own, in reserve, were not substantially involved. The Fusiliers, who were in Lemon Trench, reported that the Essex in the front line held on until practically wiped out and that their "A" Company, in close support, was similarly destroyed. They claimed that for a time they stopped the enemy advancing beyond the close support trenches. The 1st King's Own also noted at the close of the day the heavy losses of the 2nd Essex and added, "2nd Lancashire Fusiliers and 1st King's Own only left in the Brigade." The day's story of the happenings to the 12th Brigade commenced with a report from the Essex at 1.38 a.m. that the situation was quiet, and another, at 2.8 a.m., that an Essex patrol had found the enemy working in the trenches and had been fired upon, one man being reported missing. At 3 a.m. came a heavy bombardment with high explosive and gas. Though at 3.34 a.m. an Essex patrol reported no sign of the enemy, yet at 3.37, on the right flank, the Battalion stated that the situation was lively. An hour later there was heavy shelling of the Essex front and support lines and communication trenches, to subdue which artillery counter-fire was requested. At 5 a.m. there were signs of an imminent attack and two companies of the King's Own were moved up to Mississippi and Missouri trenches. Enemy shelling continued and at 5.40 a.m. Brigade headquarters received the welcome news that the front line was cleared in perfect order, which meant that the Essex were established in their battle line, as arranged. Hostile bombardment increased in intensity and then at 7.20 a.m. the S.O.S. signal went up. The German assault had come, there was a break through on the right and by 8.15 a.m., after desperate fighting, the survivors of the Battalion had reached Harry and Humid trenches at the point of junction with Cable trench, where they were holding out with the Lancashire Fusiliers.

The enemy did not penetrate farther and though the position for some hours appeared critical in the extreme, with troops falling back on the right and left, yet the line held by the Essex and Lancashire Fusiliers—Trent-Hudson-Stoke Avenue—at 6 p.m., with the King's Own in Mississippi and Missouri trenches, was, subject to slight adjustment, the trenches which they were occupying at 11 a.m.

HOW THE ESSEX WITHSTOOD THE ONSLAUGHT.

The stay of the 2nd Essex at Berneville had been most beneficial and an officer wrote that when they went into the line, under Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson, in relief of the 1st King's Own, the men were in a state of efficiency equalled only by their comrades who composed the Battalion at the outbreak of war. "Fit as hard training, good feeding and plenty of amusement could make them, the prevailing spirit was, 'Let's get at the Hun.'" To the number of 19 officers and 500 other ranks, on the night of March 23rd-24th they occupied the front line trenches, "Cork" "Chalk," "Chicken," "Cauldron" and "Charlie," with Battalion headquarters in "Chili." Gavrelle, on the left, was within the 56th Division area, but being a shell-trap, was unoccupied, though encounters between patrols frequently occurred there at night. The divisional boundary lay a little south of Gavrelle, where a shallow valley crosses the trench system. The front line trenches at this point were inclined to be swampy, were overlooked by the enemy on Greenland Hill and also commanded by our support trenches and strong-posts. For these reasons and to economize troops, a gap of about 300 yards was left unoccupied, the front trenches being filled in with loose barbed wire. Flanked by strong-posts and guarded by support trenches, it was thought that this valley would form a death trap for the Germans if they penetrated at this point. Unfortunately, when the attack came the devastation caused by the bombardment on the strong-posts and the momentum of the masses of troops employed carried them up the valley, thus enabling them to get into the communication trenches and to take the forward zone trench system in flank. On the right, looming ominously, was the hill upon which stood Monchy-le-Preux, south of the Scarpe. The enemy re-occupation of this dominating position had raised the question whether the position defended by the 4th Division ought to be retained, but it was wisely decided that it would be better policy to fight the coming battle over ground which was well-known rather than to change the whole system of defence by a hasty withdrawal to new positions. Behind the British trenches, with open land between, lay Fampoux and the valley of the Scarpe, whilst in their front was undulating pastoral country, pitted with the chalk thrown up from trenches or from shellholes, and across which the enemy was to advance in thousands at day-break. Six years later the trenches, wire and shell-holes had



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disappeared and luxuriant crops were growing, but at almost every footstep were upturned shell fragments and pieces of rotting equipment. The front line was held by outposts, with the line of resistance in the close support trenches.

The first four days were relatively quiet, but on the night of March 27th there was expectation that the storm would break early on the morrow. At that time "A" Company (Captain J. H. V. Willmott), left, "C" Company (Captain H. L. Hughes) and "D" Company (Capt. G. B. Arnold), right, occupied the forward positions. The sentries were in the front line trenches, the remainder of the Companies being placed in close support. "B" Company (Capt. Basil Willmott) was in support, Company headquarters being in Chalk Reserve. The left flank of "B" Company's position was defended by one platoon, whilst another was similarly posted along Calf Reserve on the right. The remainder of the Company was with Company headquarters. "A," "C" and "D" Companies were to hold on to the front line as long as possible and then to fall back on "B" Company, along whose trenches further resistance was expected to be made. During the night signallers put an extra telephone cable from Battalion headquarters to "D" Company, then along to the companies on the left, thus providing auxiliary means of communication. "I do not recall anyone being 'windy'," wrote a signaller. "The conversation certainly betrayed signs of suppressed excitement and with the usual Tommy's humour under all circumstances, various of them surmised as to how far towards Berlin or Blighty they would be twenty-four hours later. I remember one youthful orderly who emptied his pockets of everything except his paybook, quoting meanwhile from a signalling manual that orderlies should travel as lightly equipped as possible. We obtained what sleep we possibly could and some of the soundest sleepers had to be awakened when the enemy guns began!"

At 3 a.m. on March 28th a fierce artillery bombardment of all calibres was directed upon the forward trenches. There were four separate barrages—one falling upon the front line, one upon the support and one upon the back areas, the fourth moving at will over the whole ground. This fire was augmented at 5 a.m. by the trench mortars, which cut the wire entanglements and searched the front and support lines. The advanced trenches afforded inadequate shelter from this fire because of the lack of dug-outs, and the front companies suffered heavy losses. Yet there was no yielding of ground. Lieut. Pulfer, with two men of "A" Company, was on patrol in "No Man's Land" and when he got back to Company headquarters he found the commander, Captain Willmott, was wounded. The telephone lines were cut one by one and communication with Brigade was destroyed at an early hour. The line put under the trench boards on the previous evening survived, however, and "D"

Company was in touch until a signaller was ordered to disconnect his instrument. The bombardment was so heavy and the resulting smoke so dense that it was impossible for those at Battalion headquarters to ascertain what was happening forward and they could only conjecture the enemy was advancing as the barrage moved towards them. At 7 a.m. the fire increased in fury and intensity and five minutes later the first movement was observed among the Germans massed in large numbers in their front system. Then at 7.15 a.m. line after line of the enemy advanced across "No Man's Land" and the ground was thick with field grey uniforms. As arranged, the S.O.S. went up from all companies. Every survivor fired rifle or Lewis gun as rapidly as he could get ammunition in the breach or drum into position, the wounded men helping them by bringing up ammunition. Two Lewis guns posted in Civil Avenue did excellent work until they were put out of action. The first wave was checked, but thousands more poured forward, working round the flanks and creeping along from shellhole to shellhole. They then broke through the gap of 300 yards between the Essex and the 56th Division already mentioned. The remains of the three companies fought on until ammunition and bombs were completely exhausted. It was at this time that an endeavour was made to take Capt. Willmott to the rear above ground, owing to the enemy threatening the communication trenches, but that officer was again hit and, unfortunately, killed. Lieut. Pulfer resisted until the enemy rushed his position and then he knew no more, for he fell unconscious with a blow on the head. "The Essex," wrote a surviving officer, "held on until they were surrounded, for the enemy had broken through on our flanks. Our orders were to stick to our posts, which we did until we were taken prisoners."

"As I watched the attack," wrote a member of "D" Company, "it put me in mind of a crowd coming from a professional football match in massed formation. I particularly noticed the method of the German machine gunners. One man walked in a stooping position with a gun fastened to his back, whilst another rotated and fired. I am sure this accounted for a large number of our casualties, as the bullets were skimming the tops of our trenches. I have in mind two who received head wounds, which could only have been caused by these machine guns." The position on the right soon became very critical. When the German advance began the "stand-to" was given and Lance-Corporal C. J. Webb, at the telephone, was told to send up the S.O.S., then to disconnect and move up the trench. Just as the signallers were doing so a couple of shells blocked up the entrance to the shelter and the men had to be dug out before they could enter the trench. By this time the Germans were close to the wire entanglements and trying to outflank the company, so that Capt. Arnold gave the order to retire to the communication trench and

form a flank defence, which was done by the survivors. Capt. Arnold then asked if any man knew where Battalion headquarters were and, seeing Webb, he told him to take a message to the Colonel, telling him to send up as many men as he could as quickly as possible, with bombs and ammunition. The message was delivered, but it was too late to despatch the munitions, as the enemy outflanking movement had proceeded too far.

Whilst "A," "C" and "D" Companies were thus most gallantly upholding the honour of the Pompadours and, indeed, materially assisting to preserve an important section of the British line, "B" Company were also experiencing the rigours of bombardment. When the German infantry moved forward the artillery range was lengthened on to the support line and the main positions were shelled with pitiless accuracy, continued direct hits being obtained on company and platoon headquarters, the machine gun stations and the water tank. Communication with battalion headquarters also was severed. The platoons on either flank were overwhelmed after a desperate struggle, the survivors of the platoon on the left attaching themselves to another unit and continuing the fight. The two centre platoons remained in their original positions. By 7.40 the remnants of the leading companies, as arranged, commenced to dribble back to "B" Company line and small parties of German infantry were observed crossing "No Man's Land." This frontal attack, which was not heavily pressed, was kept in check, but the artillery fire, though less strenuous, continued to search the support line. The Lewis gun was hit and put out of action, whilst the machine gun station on the right flank was wiped out, with the exception of one man. Signals sent up by the enemy gave warning that they were moving up by Chalk Reserve and Cadiz Avenue, the right and left flanks, and retention of the position was made more difficult by machine gun fire from a German aeroplane. Reduced almost to a handful—all that remained of the four companies—it was decided to withdraw two men at a time down "Chili" communication trench in an endeavour to get in touch with Battalion headquarters. The movement was set in motion by means of a pre-arranged code word and the trench was blocked with such material as was at hand to delay the enemy as much as possible. The first party had not proceeded far before the Germans were seen to be advancing again and were discovered to be in possession of Caledonian Avenue. The survivors, when the withdrawal from the support position was complete, faced the new threat by lining "Chili" communication trench and were successful in holding up the hostile advance for some time, being materially assisted by indirect machine gun fire from the batteries in the rear. As this movement was being carried out a runner returned with the information that the Germans were in possession of Battalion headquarters

in Chili Avenue. It was later ascertained that Lieut.-Colonel Thompson and the headquarters staff had only just time to escape, leaving a bonfire of papers and maps, for as they left one end of the trench the enemy appeared at the other.

The German offensive was still pressed and the Essex men found themselves being gradually hemmed in on either flank by parties of infantry who had entered "Chili" trench from Caledonian Avenue and on the right via Calf Reserve and Chalk Reserve. Then came another enemy aeroplane flying low and firing a machine gun. The men clung to their position and it was not until all ammunition was expended that the Germans were able to rush the position in Chili communication trench. Some thirty survivors of the front companies rallied round Captain G. B. Arnold at a dump of ammunition and bombs in the forward section of Chili Avenue and held up the enemy until 10.30 a.m., when their ammunition was exhausted and they were completely surrounded. "The Germans were but a few feet away when Captain Arnold told me to report to the Colonel 'he would hold out to the last,' and I left him firing his revolver," wrote the man who received the order.

At 7.40 a.m. enemy pressure on Chili Trench caused the Battalion headquarters to be evacuated, as already stated. "The scene in the communication trench," wrote a signaller, "was almost indescribable. The well-kept, neat and tidy 'Chili,' up which we had come on the 24th, was battered all to pieces and scarcely recognizable. But we scrambled over the mountains of debris—pieces of duckboard, wire, iron stakes and earth inextricably mixed up. Then we came across men of the battalion in support, and it was here (at the junction of Chili. Harry and Hussar trenches) that a strong defence line existed. Less than a score of details comprising battalion headquarters—orderlies, police, signallers, servants and others more usually associated with the administration of the Battalion—with the survivors, in all about 35 other ranks, were put into position on fire steps, whilst others were posted on the sunken road which ran from the riverside village of Fampoux towards Gavrelle. By that time the barrage seemed to have passed over the road and there was a little more time for reflection. Various items of information—and rumour—began to reach us.

" 'Jerry is coming down the road towards us from Gavrelle.'

" 'Our companies have been practically wiped out.'

" 'The remnants of 'D' Company have sent a message down by so and so saying that they are nearly surrounded, but that they will hang on to the last.'

" Judging by the stories told by wounded men and others who managed to get back, deeds of heroism were performed by the dozen that morning and there was no doubt large numbers of Pompadors died fighting gamely to the last. There is

the incident of two cooks who, having made the breakfast tea for "B" Company, found themselves forced to vacate the position before the tea was issued, but who stopped by their fire long enough to mix chalk and other rubbish with the tea in order that 'Jerry might have a tasty drop if he reached that spot.' These two then made their way down the communication trench, stopping every few yards to mount upon the side of the trench and take a pot-shot or two at the advancing enemy. If, as they walked, a shell burst unpleasantly close to them, they again stopped and, as one of them put it, 'knocked another couple over to teach 'em to be quiet.' As the morning went on it was apparent that the enemy were being held and as the barrage had moved farther towards our rear it seemed certain that his plans had gone wrong somewhere. A low-flying enemy aeroplane which came along close over the sunken road was brought down by a Lewis gunner's action in facing our rear on top of the bank and firing at short range. All that day heavy firing went on. The enemy had advanced simply weighed down with blankets, extra boots, several days' rations and quantities of ammunition, and when they emerged from cover at any time during the day their slow progress made them easy targets for machine gunners and riflemen."

The remnants of the Battalion were later attached to the Lancashire Fusiliers, but by this time the enemy could go no farther. In this section of the line, in his mighty effort to capture Arras, he was only able to advance a distance of less than 2,000 yards in the Brigade battle zone. It was a glorious episode in the history of the Pommepuys, and with them were associated, of course, officers and men of the Machine Gun Corps. That same night the Battalion was moved back to Athies—dazed with the shell-fire and wondering why they were alive—and spent the hours of darkness in transporting bombs and ammunition to the front line battalion. On March 30th five officers and 75 other ranks, the remnant of 500 stout fighting men, marched out of the railway cutting at Athies to Haute-Avesnes. There they were quickly recruited by reinforcements and thirteen days later were moved to the Ypres Salient to assist in staying the enemy's advance in that quarter. Thirteen officers were killed, wounded and taken prisoner, of whom Captain J. H. V. Willmott, M.C., was killed. Of other ranks, 418 were returned as casualties, of whom 342 were reported missing, over eighty were later gazetted as killed and of the remainder, the majority were wounded and taken prisoner, the rapid advance of the Germans having prevented their removal.

COMPLETING THE CAPTURE OF RIEZ-DU-VINAGE.

The Battalion had scarcely rested and reorganized at Haute-Avesnes when the German "push" in the Ypres sector caused several of the sorely-tried Somme divisions to be hurried to that

quarter, particularly in the neighbourhood of Armentières. The 4th Division was on the move by April 12th, 1918, the Essex men being transported by lorries to Busnes, near Lillers. "On the journey," wrote one, "we met parties of refugees with their belongings. A pitiful sight it was to see these peasants and farmers with just the few things they had scrambled together. Women pushing perambulators, old men with wheelbarrows, farm carts laden with furniture and sacks of potatoes, all in a disjointed procession. Some few women were in tears; others—the majority—with set, stern faces." At 6 p.m. on the 18th the Essex were at Busnettes and three days later had relieved 1st Rifle Brigade in the support area, not without some casualties, however. All four companies were upon La Bassée Canal Bank, with headquarters in Bellerive. On the 18th the enemy launched his last effort from Givenchy to the west of Merville, but did not make much progress, and on the front of the 4th Division he was repulsed with heavy loss. The barrage commenced on the Essex front at 1 a.m. and the attack materialized two hours later, but it was frustrated without great difficulty and the Brigade reacted with effect. The King's Own assaulted the village of Riez-du-Vinage at nine the same evening and seized the eastern side, when the Essex were ordered to complete the capture, the King's Own having less than a hundred men left. The Battalion had been recruited to strength by large drafts of "A fours," and in the subsequent operation, to use the words of an officer with them, "they fought like tigers." The position of affairs in the village was not clear, so that when the King's Own had been relieved the Essex occupied the perimeter and awaited events. "At dawn next morning (19th)," wrote an officer, "a Hun was seen walking down the village street, whistling, by one of the posts, and he was collected. Then an officer with a little white flag and one of our men who had been captured also walked down the street, so we collected them. This caused Major Aldworth, who commanded 'B' Company, to investigate the condition of affairs in the village, and it was then found to be full of Germans." The Essex were immediately sent in to seize Riez, but the enemy had also taken alarm and there was hand to hand fighting all day long among the ruins of the houses, the Germans having collected in the cellars. There were heavy casualties. Captain J. G. H. Kennefick, Lieutenants L. C. Gladden, 2nd Lieutenants J. Hayhurst and E. W. Standerwick were killed. Over 200 of the enemy were killed and 50 taken prisoners—altogether a gallant exploit, for which Major Aldworth deservedly received the D.S.O. and eleven other members of the Battalion well-earned decorations. During the engagement the combatants were so close that the Major made lively use of his fists. On the evening of the 21st the Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, proceeding to a position north of the village, with "D" Company between Riez-du-Vinage and the Canal.

CAPTURING THE CAPTORS.

The offensive operations continued and on the 22nd both the 4th and 61st Divisions made successful attacks, resulting in the capture of some hundreds of prisoners. The Essex were not actively engaged, but later in the day they were sent up to fill a gap between the 61st Division and the Lancashire Fusiliers. A curious experience befell a party of "D" Company whilst they were marching in single file trying to find the Lancashire Fusiliers. "All of a sudden," wrote one of the men, "we were met with a hail of machine gun bullets. About six of us on Company headquarters—the sergeant-major, two signallers, two runners and myself—dropped flat on our faces, but the rest retired. We managed to wriggle into a cutting at the side of the road and lay in about six inches of water until dawn, when we could see the Germans about 10ft. away. At daybreak they called on us to surrender and after they had thrown one or two bombs on us we knew it was all over. The German officer accommodated us in a shell-hole which he used as his headquarters. One of the runners was badly wounded and had to be looked after carefully. The officer treated us fairly well and told us in broken English they were being relieved that night by the Prussian Fusiliers and that we were to go down to the German headquarters for inspection. We started at dusk, taking our wounded runner on a stretcher made of a pole and a waterproof sheet. It was a journey I shall never forget, as, hungry and wet, we tramped across ploughed fields, escorted by four 6ft. Germans. As we were walking along we noticed the glow of a cigarette—at least, that was what it appeared to be—and, of course, we moved towards it, or, should I say staggered, with our wounded comrade. It turned out, I believe, to be one of 'A' Company's outposts. Thus it was that our captors, who included the German officer, were quickly relieved of their firearms and were themselves taken prisoner. Acting on the information obtained from us, a raid was made on the German trenches and prisoners made of men who had only been in the line an hour or two."

The casualties in eight days were severe, totalling 238—43 other ranks killed, 115 wounded, 36 missing, 42 to hospital and two died of wounds. These losses, it must be remembered, were in addition to the gaps made by the desperate resistance on the Somme. After a rest in billets, during which fifteen officers joined for duty, the Essex relieved the 1st Somerset Light Infantry on the 28th, placing "A" and "B" Companies in Pacaut Wood, with "C" and "D" in support on the Canal Bank. Another batch of seven officers reported and upon the last two days of the month 2nd Lieut. F. Corn and 2nd Lieut. N. B. Barrett were killed, one man being also killed and 13 wounded, with 80 transferred to the casualty clearing station.

IN PACAUT WOOD.

On May Day the Battalion went into reserve near Bellerive, having suffered still further from enemy shell-fire, but their "rest" was disturbed on May 8rd, because the Battalion headquarters, a farmhouse, were burnt out. When in the line again, on the 4th, the Battalion was on the left, in the right sub-sector; "C" and "D" Companies in the front, with "A" in support in Pacaut Wood; "B" in reserve at the Canal Bank and Battalion headquarters at Mont Bernenchon, the last-named being not, as its name implies, a mountain, but a slight rise in a flat district. On the 5th "C" Company did a little "peaceful penetration," we are told, and advanced their line south-east of Riez-du-Vinage, evidence that the troops were still in excellent spirit, notwithstanding the fierce and disappointing conflict in which they had been engaged for six weeks. Upon relief by the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders on May 7th, the Essex went into billets at Busnettes, but this period of cessation from trench duty was disturbed by frequent alarms. The task of reorganizing the Battalion was difficult owing to the lack of trained N.C.O's., but the work went on busily nevertheless. On the 9th warning was received that an enemy attack was in contemplation in the early morning of the 10th or 11th, with the intention of crossing the Canal in the darkness and taking Bèthune, and the Battalion stood to in positions around Mont Bernenchon. Nothing occurred, however, on those days except that 160 gas drums were discharged by our troops from projectors against Le Cornet Malo. Subsequently, on the latter day, the Battalion went into the line again and it is interesting to record the disposition of the Division at this time. There were two of the three brigades in line, each of the two brigades having their three battalions in the trenches. The 12th Brigade had 2nd Essex on the left, with the 1st King's Own in the centre and 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers on the right. The Battalion had great depth, having a company in front, another in support and two being in reserve. Over 2,000 gas shells were fired on the areas between Les Harisoirs and Hinges and Gonnehem and Bellerive, the same day that Lieut.-Colonel R. N. Thompson left for hospital, being succeeded in command by acting Major A. E. Maitland, M.C. For some days there was a constant dribble to the rear of sick and wounded. During this period a discharge of gas from 100 cylinders was made by the R.E., which apparently caused casualties, as seven minutes after discharge the enemy put up double green lights, which were relayed back. Five minutes after a golden rain rocket was fired and eight minutes later a red light. For some time there had been much curiosity as to the exact nature of certain missiles, known as "Red Mice." The Essex solved the riddle on the night of the 17th, for when some of these diminutive projectiles were

released along the front of the King's Own it was discovered that they were small gas cylinders. On the 19th May there was some shelling, when a cottage used by the support Company as a dump went up in flames. When relief came on the 20th only two Companies went back into Busnettes, "A" and "B" remaining on the Canal Bank, under the orders of the 10th Infantry Brigade. In the front line again on the 23rd, "B" Company were in advance from Pacaut Wood to the south-eastern corner of Riez-du-Vinage, "A" and "C" Companies being in right and left support respectively, "D" in reserve on the Canal Bank and Battalion headquarters in Mont Bernenchon. The system was found to be a series of posts without connection and the Battalion immediately commenced digging a proper line and wiring it. The work was not complete by the 29th, a full moon hindering operations. It was, however, well in hand by the 31st, though the trench was shallow in places. A night patrol killed a German sniper on the 25th, who was clad in an old coat, without distinguishing marks, and who used a British rifle. Patrols were very active at this time endeavouring to identify enemy units.

June was spent in and out of the front line, with rest billets in Busnettes. There was an alarm that the enemy were organizing another attack, but nothing came and by the end of the month there were indications that the grasp on the German positions was being relaxed, for on the 26th it was noted that they had given up a post in an orchard close to the front line which had been causing some amount of trouble and the following day patrols were not successful in regaining touch. There was constant pressure by the British forces in this area, and the divisions on the right and left made substantial advances. A strange disease known as "Four days' fever" broke out in the middle of the month, 78 cases being admitted to hospital.

The orchard was permanently occupied by the Battalion on July 2nd. Small reinforcing drafts arrived; 2nd Lieut. W. W. Nash was killed on the 5th. The Essex had several days' training at Busnettes, particularly in musketry and Lewis gunnery. By the 14th the Battalion was in the line again with the following Company disposition: "D," front; "A," support; "C," left reserve; "B," right reserve, with headquarters at Pompadour Farm. There was heavy rain, causing much damage to the trenches. On the 25th a party of "A" Company, under Lieut. L. W. Lake, raided the enemy trenches and shell holes, but found nobody in occupation and happily suffered no casualties. The end of the month came with the Battalion training at Busnettes, with the Brigade horse show at L'Ecleme on the 31st.

THE ADVANCE.

Under Lieut.-Colonel A. E. Maitland, M.C., the Essex relieved 1st Somerset Light Infantry at Riez-du-Vinage on August 3rd and two days later the strengthening impression was confirmed that the enemy were withdrawing. Patrols were sent out to keep in touch and isolated machine gun posts were found unoccupied. A platoon, pushed forward to occupy a line of shell holes 150 yards ahead, was reinforced later on the same day by another platoon, all the movements being hindered by heavy hostile shelling. Next day the Germans were reported to have vanished from Pacaut Wood and patrols reached Le Cornet Malo without re-discovering them. Then on August 7th came the order to advance into these positions. At 9.30 a.m. the Battalion had reached them and was digging in, notwithstanding heavy shelling with 4.2 and 5.9 guns. Later in the day another forward move was tried, but did not make much progress owing to the flank battalions being held up. On the 8th—the day upon which the Battle of Amiens opened, the beginning of the Anglo-French offensive, which never ceased until the Armistice—the Essex tried another forward movement, but were held up by machine gun fire from houses and snipers posted in the standing corn, 25 casualties being sustained. The following day the line was slightly advanced and then came relief by the 1st King's Own, the Essex proceeding to work on the old trenches, which had become the main battle line. The Battalion took over the outpost line from the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers on the 12th, the sector running approximately 50 yards west of the River Turbante and actually being established on the river bank the next day, when an Essex patrol was attacked and lost two men killed. The flattening of the salient and the consequent shortening of the line caused the 4th Division to be squeezed out and it was withdrawn, so that there came a period of training at Busnettes, this time in open warfare—by platoon, artillery formation, extension, attack and advance guard; by company, attack, fire control and fire discipline, with incessant practice for scouts and Lewis gunners. A change of scene followed. On the 22nd the Essex marched to Westrehem, then to Nedonchelle and Berguette, where they entrained for Wavrans, thence by road to Pierremont and Frevin-Capelle and finally to the assembly area east of Arras, stores and headquarters personnel proceeding to Levis Barracks in Arras. For a day or two the Battalion was in the old British front line system and then it relieved the 1st Hampshires in Eterpigny on the 31st. Owing to the exceedingly marshy nature of the ground and the difficulty of movement by day this relief took 24 hours to effect, only "A" Company



*LIEUT.-COLONEL A. F. MAITLAND, D.S.O.,
M.C., who commanded the Battalion in the last
months of the War, 1918.*

getting into position the first night. A minor enterprise by the latter against a machine gun position in the sunken road was not successful.

A good idea of the wastage of the Battalion is to be obtained from this month's casualties. Apart from a few departures to base, 191 other ranks left the Battalion, made up as follows : Killed, 18 ; accidentally killed, 1 ; wounded, 58 ; missing, 2 ; evacuated to hospital, 122. To make up these losses there was an incoming personnel of 255, comprising 231 by drafts and 24 returned from hospital.

BREAKING THE DROCOURT-QUÉANT LINE.

The 4th Division had been allotted a part in the effort to break through the Drocourt-Quéant line, astride the Arras-Cambrai road, and thus continue the advance beyond the Canal du Nord. This was the prelude to a considerable enemy retreat on both sides of the Scarpe. There was hard fighting on September 2nd by the 4th and 63rd Divisions until dusk to secure Dury Ridge, in the woods, villages and reverse slopes of which were machine gun nests, which maintained an obstinate resistance. The opposition was overcome and an advance of three miles achieved. At 5 a.m., on September 2nd, the Pompadours essayed a minor operation to enable the Battalion to get square with its objective and attacked the enemy entrenched on the left of the village of Dury. Great confusion was caused by the close nature of the country and by the troops on the right encroaching on the unit's objective. The assault, however, was successful. In the evening preliminary instructions were received that the Battalion would be required to capture Etaing, to the east, at daybreak the next day. This entailed withdrawing the Battalion, no easy task during a particularly dark night, and re-forming it at right angles. The position of the enemy around Etaing was very obscure, but the Adjutant (Captain Morley) and R.S.M. Hodges, D.C.M., succeeded during the night in laying a tape line to mark the "jumping-off place," by the use of a compass, although handicapped by the wearing of gas masks. At zero hour on September 3rd the Essex arrived and, without pausing, moved to the attack with the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, Etaing being occupied before 7 a.m. and 77 prisoners taken. It was a day of much excitement, for the enemy were withdrawing along the whole front and the advancing troops were cheered by the knowledge that he was hastily moving to the other side of the Canal du Nord. In the two days' operations the Essex sustained considerable losses, particularly on the 2nd. There were 24 other ranks killed, 172 wounded and 48 missing ; a total of 244. The Division was taken out of the line and the Battalion marched to Arras station, where it was shelled whilst entraining for Tincques ; from the latter place it proceeded by motor lorry to billets in

Marquay. Thereafter for some days the diary is concerned only with training, which included practice in artillery formation and withdrawal from outpost to battle line. On September 20th the Battalion was taken to the neighbourhood of Feuchy, near Arras, and disposed in bivouacs and dug-outs. Two days later the Essex were in bivouacs around Orange Hill, finding very little accommodation, however. At the close of the month they were holding Hamblain, close to Etaing, and east of Fampoux.

Here a small party of the enemy tried a surprise on October 3rd, at 6 p.m., but they were easily driven off, leaving one man dead. On relief by the 15th Canadians, of the 1st Canadian Division, the Pompadours, with the rest of the 4th Division, went out of the line. The Essex marched to Montenescourt on the 7th and the next day the officers of the 12th Brigade were addressed by Major-General L. J. Lipsett, C.B., C.M.G., in Château Habarcq; he had recently succeeded Major-General Matheson in command of the 4th Division. On October 11th came a move to Bourlon Wood, then a march on the 18th to Cambrai, which had been entered four days earlier.

DIVISIONAL COMMANDER KILLED.

On October 14th the distressing news came that Major-General L. J. Lipsett had been killed while engaged in reconnaissance. He had gone up with Brig.-General E. B. Macnaughten, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the 12th Brigade, and an officer of the 49th Division to observe the front which the 4th Division were to take over from the 49th. His particular desire was to gain a view of the crossings of the River Selle between Haspres and Saulzoir. He was crawling down the slope of a wood in front of the British posts, which ran along the eastern edge of the wood west of Saulzoir, when he was hit in the face, probably by a machine gun bullet. The General managed to stagger back to the wood, but died almost immediately. Brig.-General Macnaughten assumed command of the Division temporarily and General Lipsett was buried at Quéant on October 15th, by the 3rd Canadian Division, which he had commanded for two and a half years.

The tide of Allied advance was sweeping irresistibly forward, and by the 18th the 12th Brigade were in divisional reserve in the Iwuy-Rieux area, with the companies lying in the open under trench shelters and the headquarters in a sugar refinery. Billets were secured in Villers-en-Cauchies on the 22nd, and in Haspres upon the following day. There was expectation of another attack and for some hours the Battalion lay immediately east of Ferme de Bouvencule until it was moved forward to the battle line.

THE LAST FIGHT.

The final fight of the 2nd Essex in 1918 was in the neighbourhood of Valenciennes in the contest preliminary to the

last great general action of the war, the Battle of the Sambre (1st-11th November). The enemy position, wrote Buchan, was "a strong one—the Scheldt, the Sambre Canal and the Mormal forest—but it had one weak spot. Between the Scheldt and the northern end of the forest was a gap of ten miles. Across this gap ran two little streams, the Ecaillon and the Rhônelle, and on these the enemy proposed to stand. If Haig broke through that gap, the whole position must crumble." The British commander struck fiercely on October 23rd and 24th, smashed the German resistance and passed on. The Essex were with the 4th Division of the XXII Corps, belonging to the First Army, operating close to the Le Quesnoy-Valenciennes railway, and in this difficult country and in heavy weather they fought keenly and successfully to continue the advance. The Division was put into the firing line on the second day, the 24th, but the 12th Brigade was not engaged. The River Ecaillon was crossed, partly on bridges and partly by swimming, and the whole of the objectives taken, causing a telegram of congratulation to be sent by the Corps Commander. The 12th was, however, employed in the local operations in the following three days, which "gave us Englefontaine and established our line well to the north and east of the Le Quesnoy-Valenciennes railway, from the outskirts of Le Quesnoy, past Sepmeries and Artres, to Famars." The Brigade went in at 7 a.m., on the 25th, upon a two-battalion frontage in an effort to keep the enemy on the move and to secure the village of Querenaing and the Famars road running north-east as far as the halt at the level-crossing over the railway. The Essex were on the left, with 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers on the right and 1st King's Own in reserve. The first-named Battalion had two companies in front ("B" and "D"), with two ("A" and "C") in support, about 200 yards in rear. The operation was designed with two objectives, the first being to secure the enemy trenches and then the road system south of the railway line. The barrage was of eighteen pounders, which was stationary for nine minutes before advancing, with the infantry following as closely as possible. The shell-fire fell directly into the first objective and had the trench been occupied it would undoubtedly have caused much havoc. It only contained one man, however, and he had been killed. Twenty feet in front of the trench was a wide belt of wire entanglement, uncut by the artillery fire, but the troops were enabled to pass through by the paths made by enemy carrying parties. When advancing upon the second objective (Famars road) very little enemy resistance was encountered and the few Germans who were met were quickly dealt with. This point reached, patrols were pushed forward to the Valenciennes-Le Quesnoy railway line and posts established along it. Some difficulty was experienced in keeping direction during the advance owing to the heavy smoke from the barrage. The enemy counter-attacked at 6 p.m., but it was local and lacking in enthusiasm, being easily repulsed.

The offensive was renewed next day at 10 a.m. in an endeavour to take Artres and to secure to the east of the village a bridgehead over the Rhônelle. A barrage came down about 250 yards away on the north-eastern side of the railway and remained there for ten minutes. It was very short, and the Brigade suffered some casualties. When the barrage advanced at the rate of 100 yards every four minutes the attacking troops followed closely. The enemy opposition was much stiffer than on the previous day. The machine guns were particularly active and the artillery was more accurate and alert. This notwithstanding, three officers and 60 other ranks were captured and about three times that number were killed. The prisoners appeared very dejected and stunned by the violence of the British artillery fire. On reaching high ground beyond the railway the enemy fire increased in strength, including direct shots from field guns, and difficulty was experienced in maintaining the advance, but, nevertheless, the road was occupied and posts established. The river was crossed by two companies of the Lancashire Fusiliers and a bridgehead formed. The enemy reacted with vigour under a gas and high explosive curtain at 4.30 p.m. and for a while the situation was critical on the right of the 51st Division at Famars. The effort was beaten back by fire of all arms—rifle, Lewis gun and machine gun—and touch maintained with the 51st. The heavy gas concentration was particularly troublesome. Six officers were casualties (two killed—Captain A. N. Cooper-Brown and 2nd Lieut. E. Hart—one died of wounds, two wounded and one gassed). Of other ranks one died of wounds, 82 were wounded and 11 gassed. The enemy persisted in counter-attacking on the 27th and succeeded in driving the right flank of the 51st Division out of Famars. Two companies of the 1st King's Own were attached to the Essex and one of them was promptly utilized to form a defensive flank. The 51st Division were not long out of Famars, however, for they recaptured the village and re-established their posts about 150 yards in front of the position previously held. The Essex advanced their left flank accordingly and maintained connection. There were 16 casualties (four other ranks killed, 11 wounded and one missing).

In commenting upon this movement the commander of the Essex wrote : " Throughout the whole of the operations it was obvious that a very great improvement had been attained in means of communication. Visual signalling was very usefully employed. The urgent necessity for timing all messages was once more evident. The whole of the men showed wonderful keenness and perseverance. Flank communication, except where actually in touch with the front line, was very difficult. It was impossible to gain touch from my headquarters with the headquarters of the battalion on my left flank, who were the right battalion of the 51st Division. The location of these headquarters could not be



"SALVAGE" REVUE.

Back Row: Private Bell, Private Robertson, Drummer Fitton, Lance-Corporal Green, Drummer Lloyd, Private Barnett, Drummer Elling, Lance-Corporal J. Finn, M.M., Private Larkin, Private E. Budden.
Front Row: Private W. Bartlett, Private C. Connoley, D.C.M., Lance-Corporal J. Dick, M.M., Private Howard, Private Benson, Lance-Corporal D. MacGregor, Private F. Goodlife.
In Front: Box Smith.

found. The careful use of the compass was necessary many times owing to the very open country and heavy smoke of our barrage. Direction could only be maintained by this means." The Division was congratulated by the Corps Commander on its achievement, particularly the seizure of the bridgehead—a worthy end to a great campaign, particularly when it is remembered that the 12th Brigade secured special commendation in 1914 for its capture of a bridge over the Marne.

On October 28th the Battalion went out of the line for the last time, relieved by the 1st King's Own, and occupied the posts on the railway line. The next day it slept in billets at Haspres, where it remained until November 2nd. The strength of the unit on October 1st was 41 officers and 710 other ranks—751; on October 31st it contained 37 officers and 607 other ranks—644, a net loss of 107 in the month's fighting.

On November 3rd the Essex were at Villers-en-Cauchies, from whence they went to Artres on the 6th, aiding the civilian populace to re-establish themselves. On Armistice Day, November 11th, there was a ceremonial parade of the Brigade, and on the 17th a service of thanksgiving held in the factory occupied by the Battalion. Two days later the men marched to St. Saulve, there being a divisional parade in Saultain aerodrome on the 20th. December was spent at St. Saulve, the chief interest being football matches in which the 2nd Essex won all their games in the Brigade junior and senior leagues and the Divisional league. In January the scene changed to Carnières, Hainault, Belgium, and at the end of February the Pompadours returned to England. Thus the Battalion passed out of the war after a stormy trial of four years and three months, in which the Essex had been at most times in positions of deadly peril; in which they had achieved much distinction; in which they had constantly and steadfastly kept their faces towards the foe, and in which they had ever been part of the 12th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Division, whose sign was a ram's head, the crest of the Lambton family.

THE BATTALION CONCERT PARTY.

Sport and other forms of amusement were a very necessary part of the life of the troops when out of the line and the Pompadours were well served in this respect. They had quite a good "gaff" party—but it was never anything other than a "gaff" party, whether the entertainment presented was in the form of a Christy minstrel show, a variety programme or a two hours' show. "Humour," wrote Mr. J. M. Finn, of Colchester, "was always a strong feature of the programme, which usually included several original items. At one time a nigger minstrel troupe, of which the drummers were the mainstay and at which the musical accompaniment was provided by two banjoists, held the boards. Shows were held in all sorts of places, from ruined barns to the public hall at Corbie on the Somme. A portable

piano was added to the properties of the party and during the summer of 1917 *al fresco* entertainments were given on the river bank at Blangy (east of Arras), and on one or two occasions big shells passed overhead (*en route* for Arras) while the programme was in progress. By this time the minstrel show had been superseded by a variety programme and the Battalion rarely spent more than a day or two in the village without a show being given. The Christmas concert of 1917 was staged in the Convent of St. Sacrement, Arras, where the Pompadours were billeted at that time. During the period of rest and training in the early part of 1918 at Berneville some good programmes were put on in a large 'theatre hut,' and it was there that the female impersonators first began to shine. Opportunities for the concert party were few during the late summer of 1918, as the army was then on the move, but after the Armistice in November the Battalion was stationed for about six weeks in St. Saulve (a suburb of Valenciennes) and there the 'gaffs' were re-established in earnest. Pierrot costumes were procured and the variety programmes included songs, duets, choruses, sketches, ventriloquism and conjuring. For the great event on Christmas Eve much 'secret' preparation went on and the result was a varied 'first half' and then a one hour revue, 'Will it take on?' An original 'book' and a topical quintette were prepared for the latter, some of the matter being written by a certain bugler on guard and another member of the party in the privacy of the prisoners' room attached to the guardroom at the officers' mess. The band had arrived from England, and with the bandmaster providing a tip-top orchestra and band parts, the revue created quite a furore. When the Battalion moved to Carnières the concert party secured a great triumph at the local music hall with an original two hours' revue, entitled 'Salvage.' A quartette of 'female impersonators,' dressed, bewigged and made-up under the skilled supervision of the Adjutant, were the talk of the village. This revue ran for several nights, culminating with a great farewell performance when the Battalion left at the end of February."

BRIGADIER-GENERAL LUMLEY JONES.

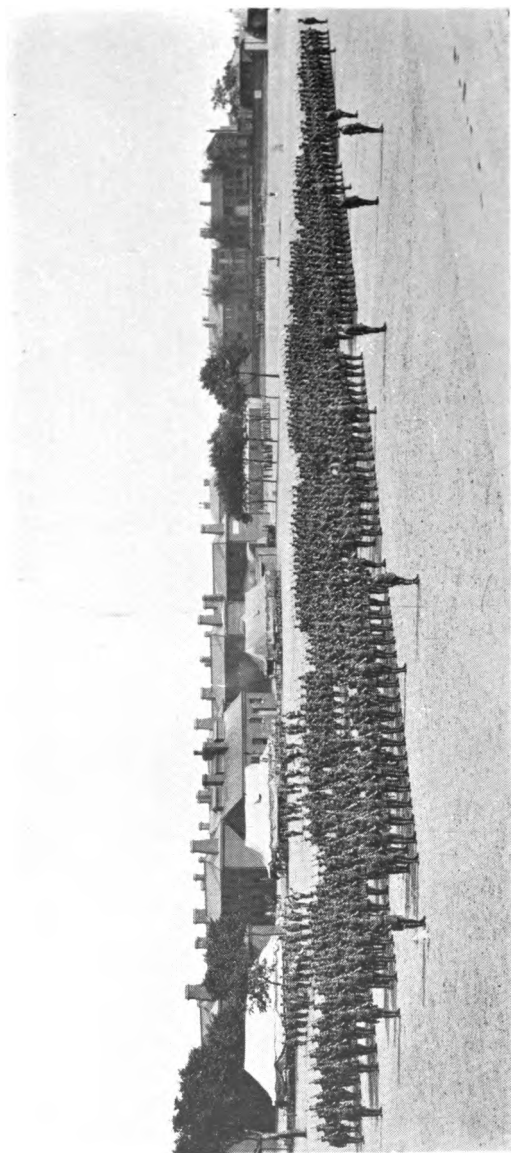
Ere the conflict had ebbed away the Essex were to suffer the irreparable loss of one of the most brilliant soldiers from its ranks that the war had produced—Brigadier-General Lumley Owen Williams Jones, D.S.O., affectionately known among his intimates as "Lumpy." It will be remembered that he had led the 2nd Essex with much distinction in the Second Battle of Ypres and in recognition of his prowess he was promoted Brigadier-General, to command the 18th Brigade, in November, 1915. Whilst holding that appointment he contracted pneumonia and died on September 14th, 1918, being buried two days later in the military cemetery at Gézaincourt, near Doullens, Somme. All who were associated with him in his period of service



The late BRIG.-GENERAL L. O. W. LUMLEY JONES, D.S.O.

in the army spoke of him with enthusiasm, being warm in their praise of him as a soldier and a man. "All his life," wrote Mr. William Trevor, of Lothbury Park, Newport Pagnell, "he retained an extraordinary freshness that was as wholesome as the sunshine, reviving the depressed and encouraging the faint-hearted. Up to the end he enjoyed the animal spirits of a vigorous schoolboy. His finely-cut features, his wholesome, ruddy complexion, his clear, fearless eyes, in which there was no trace of shiftiness, compelled admiration and confidence. He was always bright and pleasant, meeting inconvenience with a laugh and suffering with a joke." Born on December 1st, 1876, he was the youngest son of the late Mr. R. E. Jones, D.L., J.P., of Cefn Bryntalch, Montgomeryshire. After being educated at Winchester School, where he was a member of the cricket eleven and developed into an all-round athlete, he took a commission in the 4th Battalion South Wales Borderers (Montgomeryshire Militia) and from that regiment, in December, 1897, was gazetted to the 2nd Essex, which he joined in Burmah. He first saw service in South Africa in 1901, taking part in operations in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, for which he was awarded the Queen's Medal with four clasps. From 1904 to 1908 he was seconded to the Southern Nigerian Regiment, in West Africa, doing duty in the Kwale Ishan district and gaining the General Service Medal. Rejoining the Pompadours in 1908, he became Adjutant in 1912, at the time when Brig.-General L. R. Carleton was in command of the Battalion. Captain Jones, as he then was, won the entire confidence of his commanding officer, who later penned the following tribute to his former adjutant: "If I were asked to name his leading characteristics that most called forth my love and admiration for him I would say they were his magnetic enthusiasm, vigour, pluck, directness and thoroughness regarding all that was manly and right in matters of duty and of sport; his warm, impulsive love of his old school, Winchester, of the Regiment and of everything concerning them; his frankness of thought and word, to his seniors in rank as well as to his juniors, ever tempered by his high and soldierly standard of discipline and duty; his ability, resource and energy as a leader and organizer; his unconquerable cheerfulness in trying conditions joined with his keen sense of humour; and—here, perhaps, are the most potent of all his qualities in gaining the love of his fellows—his loyalty, kindness and affection for his friends, whatever their rank; his thorough and unhesitating devotion of himself and his personal interests or wishes to the cause of duty and of the efficiency and honour of the Regiment; his high tone in all things, combined with transparent genuineness of character through and through." Such was the man who was adjutant of the 2nd Essex when the mobilization order came in August, 1914, and such was the man who in the fierce fighting in the Second Battle of Ypres, when in command of his Battalion,

used his slender resources with such intrepidity and initiative that on two occasions his action was admitted to have saved the line. For his services he was awarded the D.S.O. and promoted to command the 18th Brigade of the 5th Division, which he took into action upon the Somme in 1916. In 1917 the Brigade was lent to the Canadians and was in the centre of the line formed by the four Canadian Divisions which played a prominent part in the capture of Vimy Ridge on April 9th. At the close of the Battle Major-General H. E. Burstall, commanding 2nd Canadian Division, to which the Brigade was attached, wrote to Brigadier-General Lumley Jones : " Now that your Brigade has ceased to be attached to the Division, the G.O.C. wishes to convey to all ranks under your command his admiration of their conduct during the time your Brigade has been under his orders. The Brigade had an exceedingly difficult task to perform and they carried it through in the most dashing and workmanlike manner. The G.O.C. is proud to have had such a magnificent body of officers and men under his command. To you personally he wishes me to convey his thanks for the masterly way in which you handled your Brigade." Promoted to Brevet Lieut.-Colonelcy, he was again in the thick of it with his Brigade in the autumn of 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres. A brief spell of service followed in Italy, after which he returned to France in March, 1918, being then promoted Brevet Colonel. Fighting ensued west of Merville, resisting the German offensive, and, when reaction came in August, he was with the Army which advanced victoriously on Bapaume. Then, when the command of a Division was almost at hand, he fell a victim to pneumonia and died on September 14th, 1918. All those who had been associated with the General sincerely mourned their loss. His Divisional General wrote of him : " I cannot speak too highly of the splendid and gallant manner in which he has for so long a period commanded his Brigade in action. His devotion to officers and men alike was well-known and his last thoughts were centred on the Brigade he loved so well." His Brigade Major said : " I never before met any man I so loved and admired. He was a wonderfully good soldier, utterly regardless of his own comfort and safety, and simply lived for his Brigade and everyone working under him." Another described him aptly as " a really human man and a gallant leader," and it was these qualities which were most dwelt upon by those who mourned him. Then came the last scene at Gézaincourt, with a piper of the K.O.S.B. playing a lament, a salute from a detachment from each battalion of the Brigade and the sounding of the " Last Post." In the war General Lumley Jones had found his great opportunity and in the battle zone his last resting place. But his name remains an imperishable memory with the " Pompadours."



Battalion on Parade at Colchester in 1919.

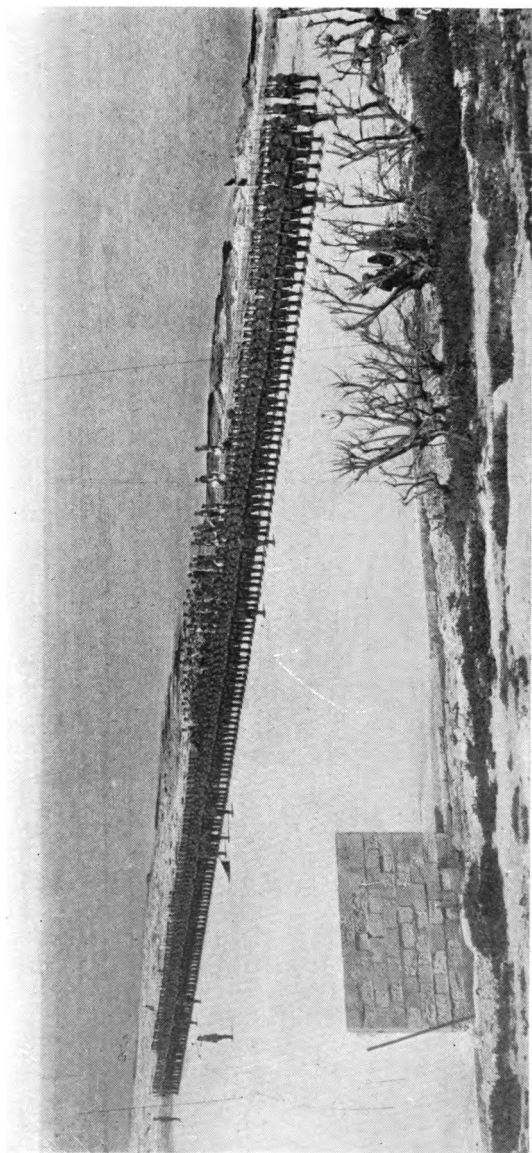
RE-FORMATION OF THE BATTALION.

It was not long before active steps were taken to re-form the Battalion in preparation for a tour abroad. The foreign service details at Warley Barracks, about 25 strong, under the command of Major H. R. Bowen, D.S.O., with Capt. A. G. de la Mare, M.C., Lieut. W. H. Lawton and Lieut. C. J. I. F. Hopegood, were sent in February, 1919, to Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester, to await the cadre of the 2nd Battalion (strength, three officers and 54 other ranks, commanded by Brevet-Major W. Aldworth, D.S.O.), which arrived on April 24th, 1919. Major Bowen had with him eleven officers, Captain A. G. de la Mare, M.C., being acting Adjutant and Lieut. W. H. Lawton acting Quartermaster. Recruits constantly arrived and for several weeks all ranks were strenuously engaged in re-creating the Battalion and in inculcating pre-war customs of the "Pompadours," only a small percentage of the men having had pre-war experience. By May two Companies ("A" and "B") had been formed and the baggage, which had been stored since August, 1914, was distributed to those claimants who had survived the war. Companies received their sports gear and the various messes their special property, "little treasures being recognized here and there which had been forgotten during the fateful years of war." New arms and web equipment were also issued. Captains C. C. Spooner, D.S.O., A. H. Blest and S. Freestone, M.B.E., M.C., also joined, the last-named as quartermaster. "C" and "D" Companies were formed in June and other officers reporting for duty included Major W. J. Maule, who assumed command of the Battalion, Major (Brevet Lieut.-Colonel) H. E. Crocker, C.M.G., D.S.O., Captains J. V. Atkinson, M.C., H. S. Doe, M.C., and R. E. G. Carolin. Rapid progress was made in July and the Battalion was declared to be assuming the appearance which a regular unit should possess. Brevet-Major Pechell, M.C., was among the five officers who rejoined during this month. Major A. G. L. Pepys, M.C., assumed command in August and Captain H. S. Doe, M.C., became Adjutant. The four company commanders were: "A"—Captain J. V. Atkinson, M.C.; "B"—Major H. E. Crocker, C.M.G., D.S.O.; "C"—Major H. R. Bowen, D.S.O., and "D"—Brevet-Major P. Pechell, M.C. The expectation had been that the Battalion would be despatched to India, but intimation was received that the first foreign station would be Malta. For this purpose all ranks were fitted with sun helmets and khaki drill clothing. On the evening of September 8th, 1919, the Battalion, with a strength of 20 officers, seven warrant officers and 780 other ranks, and commanded by Major Pepys, entrained at St. Botolph's Station

for Dover. At that port they embarked for France and reached Boulogne on the morning of the 9th, whence they marched to Column Camp pending entrainment at Marseilles. "This camp brought back memories to many who had made its acquaintance during the war years when passing through from the Western Front on leave." Entraining on the evening of the 10th September, the "Pompadours" reached Marseilles about mid-day on the 12th, being accommodated under canvas at No. 6 Camp. An enforced stay of ten days was made owing to a strike of the French dock workers, but all ranks thoroughly enjoyed their holiday at the great Mediterranean port. On September 21st the Battalion went aboard the "Himalaya," having as companions a half battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment, destined for Palestine. Malta was reached two days later and the 2nd Essex were quartered in the same barracks at Imtarfa that they inhabited from 1905-1907. Field-Marshal Lord Plumer, Governor of Malta, inspected the Battalion on September 25th. In December "A" Company was detailed for duty at Floriana, Valetta, and Captain A. E. Maitland, D.S.O., M.C., was appointed Adjutant. St. George's Barracks were occupied in January, 1920, and in the following March Lieut.-Colonel A. P. Churchill took over command. "Arras Day" was observed by a special commemoration service, after which the regimental colour was trooped in the presence of the Governor, Lord Plumer.

ANXIOUS MONTHS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

The situation in the Near East became critical and the Battalion hastily embarked in June upon the transport "Trent" for Constantinople, having a strength of 21 officers and 761 other ranks. The 2nd Essex were quartered at Haidar Pasha, with one company at Chamlija on outpost duty. On the last day in September a move was made to the village of Dodalu and Pasha Keui, respectively about eight and fifteen miles east of Scutari. In addition to finding the necessary guards and outposts, much time was devoted to training and field firing, whilst each company performed a march under service conditions lasting several days. "A" Company was then sent to Shile, on the Black Sea, in order to convey transport and stores from that town to Scutari, the garrison of Shile having been withdrawn to Constantinople. On October 26th, 1920, the Battalion sailed for Malta in the transport "Rio Pardo." A telegram was despatched by General Harington, Commander-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea, to Lord Plumer, stating that the work of all ranks of the Essex had been of a high standard. The Governor inspected the Battalion on its return, expressing pleasure with the reports he had received of its conduct and complimenting it upon the general turn-out and steadiness upon parade. The strength in January, 1921, was 26 officers and 939 other ranks, in which month a machine gun platoon was organized. "Arras Day" was again



Arras Day at Malta, 1920.

ceremonially observed and in November, when the Prince of Wales landed at Malta *en route* for India, the Battalion furnished the guard of honour at Valetta and the officers' guard was found by the Battalion at the main guard room during the Prince's visit. When he left H.R.H. expressed to the commanding officer, through the Governor, his appreciation of the smartness and soldierly bearing of the guard of honour and of the officers' guard. On the 15th November, 1921, the 2nd Essex, on relief by the 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex, sailed for Constantinople in the transport "Brandenburg" and five days later were at the barracks at Haidar Pasha in relief of the 1st Gordon Highlanders. It was at this station that "Arras Day" was again observed by a commemoration service in memory of the fallen and by the trooping of the colour in the presence of the G.O.C. British Corps of Occupation. In addition to the customary training and instruction in musketry, small outpost companies were formed during the summer. The situation was again critical and in July there was heavy fighting between the Kemalists Turks and the Greeks in Asia Minor, which ultimately resulted in the expulsion of the latter. To aid their hard-pressed comrades, the Greeks concentrated troops in Thrace, threatening an advance on Constantinople. To resist this movement, a mobile column, including the Essex, was formed, under Colonel Commandant W. D. Emery, C.B., C.M.G., and which was to act in conjunction with French and Italian troops. Accordingly the Battalion (less one company) was moved by train to Tursun Keui in the Chatalja lines, but upon the overthrow of the Greeks in Asia Minor the troops in Thrace ceased to be a menace and except for slight affairs of outposts between the local gendarmerie on either side, no hostile act occurred. There was no lack of preparation for eventualities, however, and the work remained strenuous. Every detail of the plan of action should fighting take place was thoroughly worked out and there were continued field days in co-operation with the Allies. The weather was good and firm friendship was established with the 3rd (K.O.) Hussars, the covering cavalry regiment. The Essex, on return to Haidar Pasha, on September 11th, 1922, had to face a new peril, for the Kemalists Turks, with Smyrna in their possession, threatened, in turn, the Allied occupation of Constantinople and Gallipoli. British reinforcements were sent from Malta, Egypt, Gibraltar and the United Kingdom, and defensive lines were formed covering the old Turkish capital and Chanak, whilst measures had also to be taken to deal with a possible rising of the Turks within the British zone. The Battalion was allotted a portion of the line covering Scutari and Haidar Pasha, and there was much trench-digging and wiring. An outpost was established at Guebze in close touch with the Turks and here, as elsewhere, it was only by the tact and firmness of the young officers and men on the spot that hostilities were

avoided. When the Convention was signed in October the situation was eased and Lieut.-General Sir Charles Harington paid tribute to "The wonderful forbearance of the British troops in the most trying circumstances. That forbearance has won for them the admiration of all. Their attitude is a very fine example of British discipline." Precautions were not relaxed for the time being, however. There was increasing vigilance and hard work on the defences, whilst there were almost daily rehearsals of possible courses of events should war break out. The danger happily passed, however. On January 29th General Harington inspected the Battalion and thanked all ranks most warmly for their loyal support; then on March 6th the Essex sailed on the transport "Derbyshire" for India, with a strength of 24 officers and 860 other ranks, first visiting Malta to embark details and the wives and families.

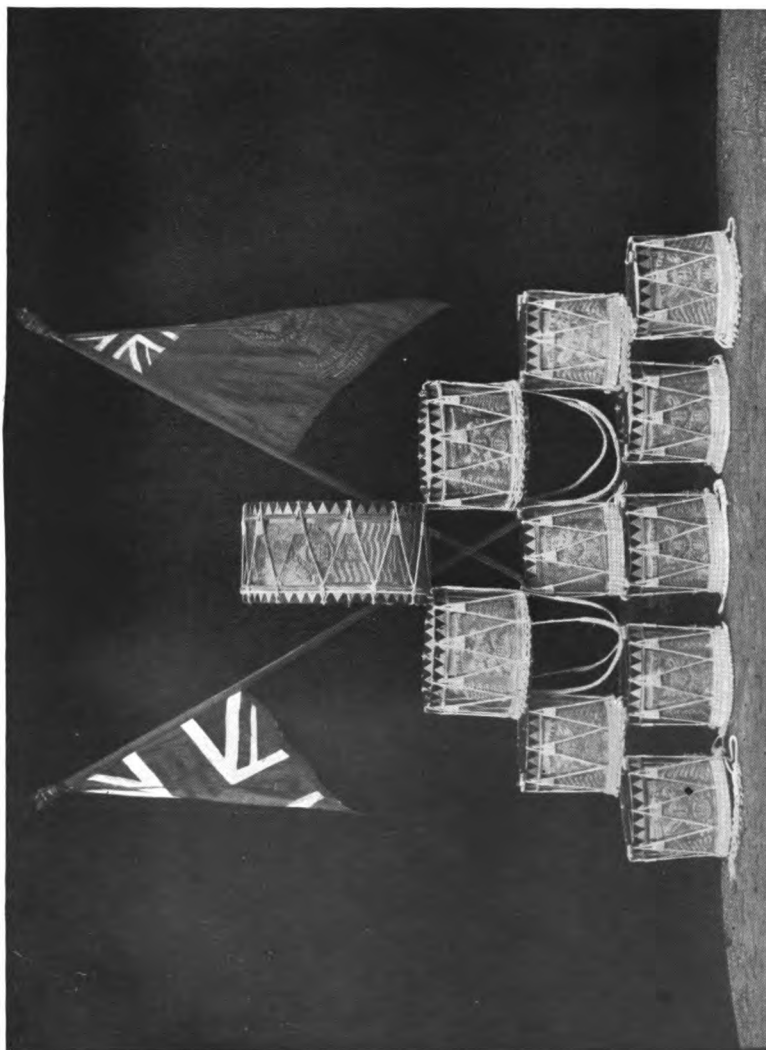
The wife of an officer serving with the Essex wrote a humorously graphic account of her impressions of the summer of 1922 at Moda, Constantinople, when war seemed so close at hand, first with the Turks and then with the Greeks: "The hydrophobia scare in the early part of the summer seemed, on looking back, to have been the beginning of a somewhat unrestful time. I remember the day I was warned not to let my children out by themselves on account of mad dogs everywhere, or, at least, I was told they were everywhere, for I never met one in its full flight of madness until after the official poisoner had been at work. In true Oriental fashion, it seemed no man's job to remove the wretched animal's body, which would be left for hours on the road lying in the sun. The tales we heard and were expected to believe were wonderful. People quite solemnly discussed whether fleas from a mad dog could carry the infection. It seems funny now, but not so then, when seventeen persons of one household were under treatment at the same time at the Pasteur Institution in Constantinople. Both doctors and nurses were Turkish and, so their patients said, were not too gentle in their methods, using needles more like blunt skewers than anything else, which resulted in subsequent victims each arriving with their own instruments for treatment. The local paper talked of a mad cock, which seemed somehow to be the climax, or the Greeks took up all our attention to the exclusion of everything else, as the mad cock was the last we heard of hydrophobia. Towards the end of July we started a most hectic week with a large fire, which burnt out about 250 houses in Kadi Keui. It was really two distinct fires and a most awe-inspiring sight. One was on the quay-side, where an enormous stack of timber was entirely burnt, the owner of which had only the day before insured it rather beyond its value. I expect such a curious coincidence must at once have struck the insurance company, as by no possibility could the fire among the houses half a mile away have started it. The quayside fire was too

near the ordnance dump for safety, so some hours after the outbreak they managed to get over the two army fire engines from General Headquarters at Harbi, on the Constantinople side of the Bosphorus. The thought of both engines being on the Asiatic side at the same time so worried Constantinople that they wired about 10 p.m. to recall one, and as the quayside fire was then more or less under control, back it went. As a matter of fact, only the Crossley tender was landed, the fire engines actually being worked from lighters moored alongside the quay. They did yeoman service, pumping about ten times more gallons a minute than the local one could manage, and, in any case, the latter had a hose akin to a sieve. The Turkish fire extinguisher was most peculiar. Several men carried a stretcher with a machine like a two-handled pump upon it, and they were preceded by a companion with a kind of glorified Chinese lantern. I never saw it at work, the men seeming to spend their time running from one place to the next—I suppose to find the man who would pay them most for their help. The Gas Company were very prompt at the beginning of the fire in getting away their meters, but it seems hardly credible that the gas itself was never turned off at the main and blazed away merrily all night in the burning houses, in spite of many urgent messages sent by one of the British officers there. They turned it off all right the next morning, just as it was wanted at breakfast time. Truly Turkish! One poor woman had a most unfortunate experience. The fire actually started in the house next to hers and in five minutes her wooden house also burst into flames. Hastily collecting what valuables she possessed, she put them all into a pudding basin and ran out into the street, where a passing man put his hand into the vessel and took the lot. That was the last she saw of them. When our troops moved out for the Chatalja lines for the Greek show they looked splendid marching down through Pera with their bands and drums playing, so clean and well turned out. The weather broke just after and made the departure ten times more difficult. The original idea was that they were to encamp battalion after battalion at Mashlak and march off by road to Tursun Keui. However, the rain put a stop to that and except for the 3rd Hussars, who had a most unpleasant ride of forty miles through mud deep and sticky as only mud can be, the rest entrained at Sirkedji and went out more or less in comfort. Apart from wild rumours, things went on much as usual during the Greek scare and very soon a husbands' leave train was instituted, though whenever mine was on leave the French General seemed to arrange a grand retreat rehearsal at Tursun Keui and back he had to go. At last we heard rumours our troops were coming back and divers of them did; and after the rioting in Pera they all came back. Really, considering it was Turkey, I think the riot, if, indeed, it could be called a riot, was not very dreadful. A few lawless folk armed with

revolvers, fired at shop windows and the first floor windows of the Pera hotel and broke them all, but the Turkish Government paid up all claims for damage like lambs. Seeing it was their first victory for ten years, one can hardly blame the excitement. Curiously enough, nearly all the broken shop windows were those belonging to French firms. In Moda we had a fairly orderly procession, the only unpleasant parts of which were the burning lumps of cotton waste they flung about, which, among the wooden houses, might have caused disaster. On the second night of the celebrations the English head of the Allied Police in Moda took charge and kept the procession at Feneraki on the far side of Moda Bay going round and round till they were too tired to move any further, by calling out, 'Now, once more round for the honour of Turkey.' With cheers and yells round they went and the only time they showed any disposition to break away from his control, his wife drove the Ford police van across their only exit. Before the situation with the Kemalists developed seriously the wives and children were sent away, as those in charge did not desire another entanglement such as they had in Mesopotamia, when a number of ladies had to be safeguarded during the whole time of the rising out there. Very few wanted to leave and I, for one, envied a certain plucky little English woman, who stayed in Moda all through the war, doing her best for all her friends who had left their houses in her care and keeping a smiling face through the many unpleasantnesses she had to put up with, and who was preparing to stay out this present war in like manner to uphold the British reputation for not being 'panicky.' The people I was most sorry for were the Russian refugees, who had left Soviet Russia with Wrangel's Army and against whom Kemal's men seemed particularly bitter. Two sisters employed at British Headquarters told me their brother, who was also in our employ, saw a proclamation in Russian on a wall in Stamboul, saying with painful distinctness that those Russians who fled to Turkey with the remnants of Wrangel's army had everything to fear when Kemal's victorious troops arrived in Constantinople. I remember one unfortunate man who stood all summer in the Grande Rue de Pera and who looked so terribly ill with half-closed eyes. Each time I saw him I never expected to do so again. He had Madonna lilies for sale, as tired looking as himself, but his pride was such that when I tried to give him a little money he refused to take it, except in exchange for a lily. And there were, of course, many in like case. I always greatly admired the Cossacks and although they appeared to fairly bristle with arms and ammunition, they were quiet enough, I fancy."

IN INDIA AGAIN.

The 2nd Essex reached Bombay on March 20th, 1923, and were stationed at Amballa, where during the hot weather half the Battalion at a time were moved to Solon and Jutagh in the Simla



POMPADOURS' SILVER DRUMS.

Four Side Drums bear the following inscription : " Presented by the County of Essex, The Essex Regiment, in commemoration of their distinguished services, 1913." Four Side, Two Tenor, One Base Drum are inscribed : " Presented to the Pompadours by the Officers, Warrant Officers, N.C.Os, and Men serving in 1922, in memory of their comrades who fell in the Great War, 1914-1922.



LIEUT.-COLONEL A. P. CHURCHILL, who commanded the Battalion from 1920 to 1924.



LIEUT.-COLONEL C. R. ROBERTS-WEST
(now commanding the Battalion).

Hills, headquarters and the other half remaining at Amballa. On November 10th General Sir W. R. Birdwood made an inspection and expressed himself much pleased with the appearance of the Battalion. Six days later there was a most interesting celebration. It was the 59th anniversary of the birthday of the colours, which were presented at Deesa, India, in 1864. The Battalion trooped the regimental colour in the presence of the Governor of Punjaub and the G.O.C. Amballa Brigade area. The completed set of silver drums, the original four of which had been presented by the County of Essex after the South African war, were present on parade for the first time. The new silver drums had been purchased by voluntary subscriptions of all ranks, past and present, of the "Pompadors" to commemorate those comrades who had fallen in the war of 1914-1919. Then, on March 2nd, 1924, Lieut.-Colonel A. P. Churchill completed a notable period of command and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel C. R. Roberts-West. On February 19th, 1925, the Battalion was inspected by G.O.C. Northern Command (Sir Claude W. Jacob) and in August Major A. G. L. Pepys, M.C., retired with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. At the close of the year the strength was 22 officers, nine warrant officers and 877 non-commissioned officers and men. In March, 1926, the Battalion moved to Cawnpore, with one company at Benares. In hot weather stations were Kailana and Chaubattia.



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